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SUNDAY

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OPINION METER

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5 DAYS without a government budget for FY 2009

INSIDE

Buying a Home
The decision about whether to buy a first home is complex.
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Chicken Soup
Everyone needs some chicken soup for the soul–even pandas.
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Manolo Blahnik became a household name when "Sex and the City" made his sexy stilettos practically a member of the cast.
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Palms Resort plans to create spa park. **PAGE 2**
NMC to host congressional candidate debate. **PAGE 3**

Most PSS principals not certified

By KRISTI EATON
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REPORTER

A new report by the Pacific Regional Educational Laboratory under the U.S. Department of Education states that only 20 percent of principals in the CNMI's Public School System met certification requirements during the 2007-2008 school year.

The release of the report comes as members of the Board of Education raised concerns about the number of acting principals and vice principals in the school system.

For the CNMI, principals must hold a master's degree with a major in educational administration or related field; a

See CONCERNS on Page 4

AP

President Bush signs the Emergency Economic Stabilization Act of 2008 in the Oval Office of the White House in Washington after the House passed the $700 billion financial bailout bill, Friday, Oct. 3, 2008.

Historic bailout bill passes Congress; Bush signs

By JULIE HIRSCHFELD DAVIS
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

WASHINGTON (AP)—With the economy on the brink of meltdown and elections looming, a reluctant Congress abruptly reversed course and approved a historic $700 billion government bailout of the battered financial industry on Friday. President Bush swiftly signed it.

The 263-171 House vote capped two weeks of tumult in Congress and on Wall Street, punctuated by

RELATED NEWS

- Jobs disappear at fastest rate in 5 years. **PAGE 17**
- Paulson pledges speed in implementing bailout. **PAGE 17**

Palau official leads Independence Day fete on Saipan

By NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.
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REPORTER

Palau's Minister of State Temmy Shmull spent time enumerating some of the major economic gains of his country at the celebration yesterday of the 14th anniversary of Palau Independence Day at the American Memorial Park.

Over a hundred members of the Palauan Community Association on

See PALAU on Page 4

Minister of State Temmy Shmull speaks before his countrymen at the celebration of Palau's 14th Independence Day anniversary at the Micro Beach Pavilion at the American Memorial Park yesterday.
NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.

Privatization law will boost power rates—Muña

By KRISTI EATON
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REPORTER

The Legislature's efforts to privatize the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. are commendable, CUC executive director Antonio Muña said Friday, but he disagrees with the means of getting there.

Muña

"The efforts of the Legislature are…unfortunately, at this point, we are all on the same page, it's the vehicle which we arrive that we disagree," he said.

The Senate and House of Representatives voted this week to override

See FITIAL on Page 4

Around the CNMI

Palms Resort plans to create a 'spa park'

By STEFAN SEBASTIAN
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BUSINESS EDITOR

Amid talks to put a major international hotel chain in charge of managing Palms Resort, its owners are poised to unveil plans for a new attraction there designed to garner a fuller share of the Asian tourists on Saipan, an elaborate "spa park" that promises to give Bali's spa industry some new competition.

In an interview Friday, Hiroyuki Saito, Palms Resort's general manager, said that architects and designers are now crafting plans for what he described as a new concept in health and wellness spas that is intended to capitalize on changing trends in a travel market once dominated by destinations like Indonesia.

"The Japan and Korean markets are a little fed up with the traditional Bali style spas," said Saito in one of the resort's coffee shops. "The younger generation, what they want is something that is both very Asian and very ethnic but also something fresh, something new."

Early plans at the resort, he said, call for a spa with two distinct sections. One is a traditional spa, offering massage treatments, aromatherapy and cosmetics. Yet though a door in the spa would be the entrance to the "park," a botanical garden fitted with natural rocks, waterfalls and a dozen Jacuzzi baths, each with its own distinctive feature, such as bubbling water or a waterfall effect. Saito said the plans are set to take shape within the year.

The spa plan comes as the resort is now talking with an as yet unnamed international hotel chain—rumored to be Hilton—on a management deal that would increase its profile by giving a major boost to its marketing campaign. Saito declined to comment on the deal.

However, to complete the deal, Saito said the resort's staff is also planning other upgrades and renovations to meet the hotel chain's standards and new federal regulations.

Meanwhile, he added that the resort has plans to revamp its outdoor pool area to accommodate a barbecue area and sushi bar, a move aimed at creating a better gathering place for foreign travelers and locals.

PSS is back to 12 buses

By KRISTI EATON
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REPORTER

The Public School System is now operating with 12 buses, thanks to the quick action of Hawthorne Pacific Corp., PSS bus team leader Steven M. Pangelinan said Friday.

The school system had been down to operating with nine buses after three buses broke down during the first week of school, forcing drivers to triple and quadruple back on routes to accommodate students. Two of the buses were under warranty with Hawthorne Pacific, so PSS crewmembers could not make the necessary repairs, Pangelinan said.

"I want to really thank Hawthorne Pacific for expediting the process," he said. "If it wasn't for them, we'd still be in hot water."

Bus drivers are still having to double back on routes, but the arrival of five new buses by the end of November or the beginning of December should help the situation, Pangelinan said.

The bus team will also look at extending services to Dandan Elementary, William S. Reyes Elementary and Koblerville Elementary schools at that time. The three elementary schools currently do not have bus service.

"We just need to find out from schools…which are really affected," he added.

Koblerville is a priority, he said, because students walking to school are forced to cross a busy street with lots of motorists.

The exact number of students using the bus service will not be ready until the middle of the month, but Pangelinan earlier estimated that there was an increase of 20 to 30 percent during the first week of school, compared to last year.

Last year, 2,500 students were picked up on a daily basis.

The lack of buses has caused some students to either be late for classes for up to an hour and to get home an hour after classes are let go.

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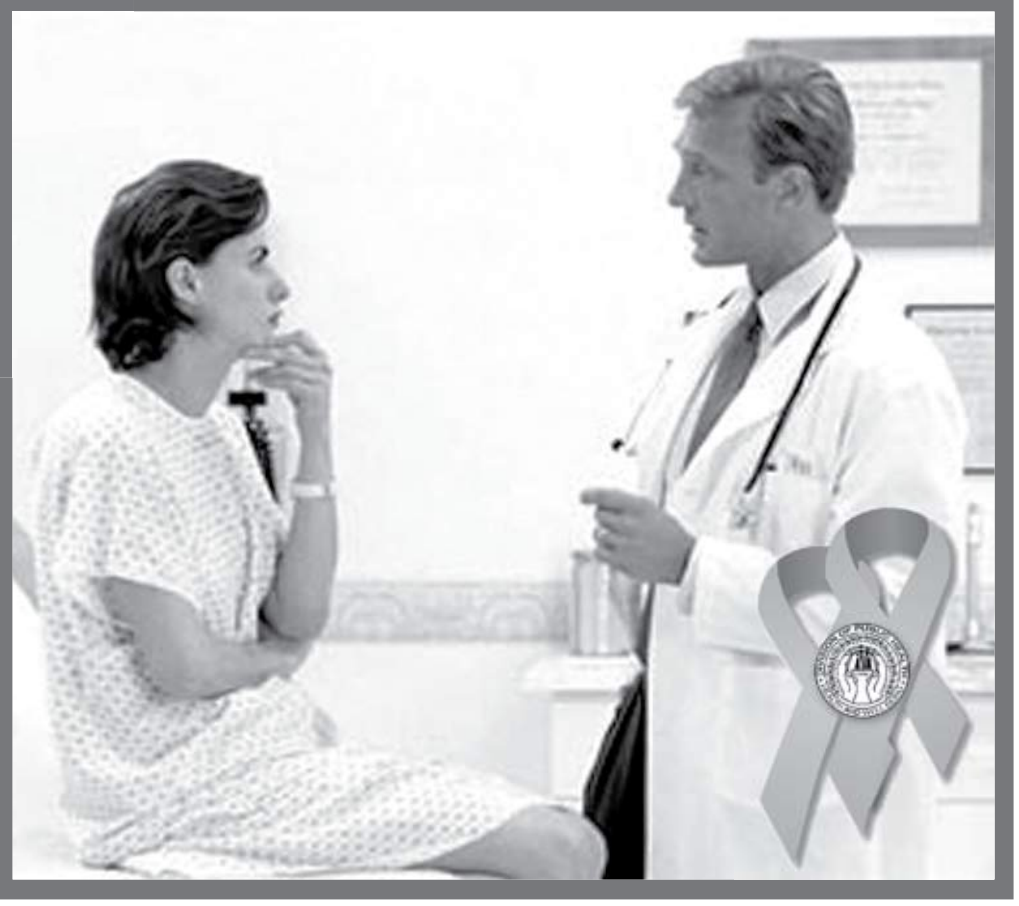

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NMC to host congressional candidate debate

Ivan T. Mereb, Jr., Associated Students of NMC president, and Carmen Fernandez, NMC president, listen to Michael C. Manglona, special assistant for Youth Affairs Office, at a press conference Friday announcing a joint effort to host a U.S. congressional delegate debate. Daniel Buniag, the Governor's special assistant for special projects, looks on.

By KRISTI EATON
kristi_eaton@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The voting youth of the CNMI are the future and need to be enlightened, Associated Students of NMC president Ivan T. Mereb Jr. said Friday at a press conference announcing a debate among candidates for the U.S. Congress delegate position.

ASNMC is working in conjunction with the Office of Youth Affairs and the Youth Congress to host the debate at the Multi-Purpose Center on Wednesday from 6pm to 7:30pm. The public is welcome and can submit questions by e-mailing them to 2008delegate@gmail.com

In the past, the youth voted for whom their elders voted for, Mereb said, but now students are casting their own votes and need to be informed.

The debate will offer students the opportunity to ask questions directly to the candidate.

Michael Manglona, special assistant for the Youth Affairs Office, said the election is historical for the CNMI.

"We're going to be the last U.S. territory included in the U.S. Congress," Manglona said. "On Nov. 4, I will vote for our voice. Who will that be? I don't know. I want to know our candidates."

Seven of the candidates will attend the debate: John Oliver Gonzales, Juan T. Lizama, Chong Won, David Cing, Resident Representative Pete A. Tenorio, John Davis and councilor Felipe Atalig. Sen. Luis Crisostimo and Gregorio Sablan will not be present because they have prior engagements.

ASNMC vice president Jose Tudelaa said the debate will help him learn more about the candidates as he prepares to vote for the first time.

"It gives me more information about the candidates," he said. "It can help us more to understand where they're coming from."

The questions will be prescreened and cover environmental, economics, social and political issues. The candidates will be asked at least five to seven questions.

Bill that seeks to amend nonexistent law vetoed

Gov. Benigno R. Fitial has disapproved a bill that requires Senate approval for appointments to the defunct Medical Professional Licensing Board.

In his veto message to the Legislature, Fitial noted that the bill seeks to amend a law that does not exist. The statute that established the Medical Professional Licensing Board was repealed in 2007.

"This legislation is a nullity and must be disapproved," he said.

The bill, authored by Rep. Victor Hocog, sought to require appointees to the medical board to obtain Senate confirmation. It also proposed to have Rota and Tinian representatives on the board.

However, the Medical Professional Licensing Board no longer exists. The Health Care Professions Licensing Board replaced it last year as the independent regulatory agency for medical professionals.

The new licensing board consists of five members appointed by the governor. No Senate confirmation is required. Under the law, the board must include one dentist, two physicians, and two members from other health care professions.

To be appointed, a health care professional needs to be practicing in the Commonwealth, a CNMI resident for two years, and engaged in the practice of his or her profession for at least five years before the appointment. The licensing board's enabling statute does not specify how membership should be allotted to the municipalities. ***(Agnes E. Donato)***

Guam Army Guard hosts Freedom Salute

The Guam Army National Guard is scheduled to host a Freedom Salute ceremony at the University of Guam's Field house today, Oct. 5, at 3pm.

The Freedom Salute Campaign is the one of the largest Army National Guard recognition endeavors in history, designed to publicly acknowledge Army Guard Soldiers and those who supported them during the President's call to duty for Operation Noble Eagle, Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom.

"We are grateful for the tremendous support from our families, friends and communities," said Maj. Gen. Donald J. Goldhorn, The Adjutant General, Guam National Guard. The sacrifices and contributions that all the island's deployed soldiers have made are without question, added the general. "They have served with distinction and deserve this day of public recognition, and their successes were made possible because of the unending support of their loved ones," said Goldhorn.

The Freedom Salute Campaign began December 2003, and has thus far recognized over 100,000 deserving soldiers, family members, friends, employers, centers of influence and other very important persons for their contributions since the terrorists attacks on American soil on Sept. 11, 2001.

The leadership of the Army National Guard considers the campaign first and foremost a recruiting and retention program.

"This is because how an organization treats its people is a direct reflection of the values the organization holds. Parents, prospects, other current members and families will watch closely how the Army National Guard treats its returning soldiers. Conducting these Freedom Salute Campaign programs is a wonderful opportunity to increase awareness in the community of the good work being done by Guard soldiers. Not only does this soldier recognition directly impact recruiting, but it affects soldier retention as well," said the Guam Army National Guard in a statement.

In a recent survey, soldiers returning from Operation Iraqi Freedom indicated that recognition for their service and sacrifice was one of the most important contributing factors in their decision whether or not they would continue to serve in the Guard.

"This program is not a 'nice to have,' 'good thing to do'; it is a 'must-have' and 'must do well' program that will continue to impact on the recruiting and retention of our soldiers," the Guard said. ***(PR)***

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PUBLIC NOTICE

OCTOBER 5, 2008
(As amended)

PURSUANT TO PUBLIC LAW 8-41, THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE COMMONWEALTH DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY THRU ITS ACTING CHAIRMAN, HEREBY INFORMS THE GENERAL PUBLIC THAT THE CDA BOARD OF DIRECTORS WILL HOLD A SPECIAL MEETING ON MONDAY, OCTOBER 6, 2008 AT 10:00 A.M. THE MEETING WILL BE HELD AT THE CDA CONFERENCE ROOM, SECOND FLOOR, WAKIN'S BUILDING, CHALAN PALE ARNOLD ROAD, SAIPAN. THE AGENDA FOR THIS MEETING IS AS FOLLOWS:

AGENDA

I. PRELIMINARY MATTERS
1. Roll Call
2. Adoption of Agenda

II. PUBLIC COMMENTS

III. QC PROGRAM/ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES
1. Saipan Laulau Development, Inc.

IV. OTHER MATTERS RELATED THERETO

V. ADJOURNMENT

All interested persons are welcome to attend and to submit written or oral testimony on the above agenda items. (Note: Pursuant to Public Law 8-41, Section 13(a)(7) and Section 13(c), the Board may vote to meet in executive session)

/s/ **PEDRO I. ITIBUS**
Acting Chairman, CDA Board of Directors

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Concerns raised over many actingships

From Page 1

minimum of six years experience; three years teaching and three years of successful experience as a school administrator or related leadership management field; and possess a valid CNMI Administrator's Certificate. Candidates must also pass Praxis I and Praxis II Content Knowledge tests.

Principals and vice principals not meeting the standards are held in an acting capacity. Currently, there are 12 acting principals and eight permanent principals in the school system.

At a recent Board of Education meeting some members raised concerns about the number of actingships, even as accreditors from the Western Association of Schools and Colleges prepare to visit nine schools this year. In the past, WASC had listed that as an area for improvement.

"With WASC, they want to ensure stability," Education Commissioner Rita Sablan said. "The board is concerned, as well as I am, at the number of actingships in the school system."

A change in the certification requirements was adopted in October 2006, said Ramon Diaz, acting Human Resources director. The Administrator's Certificate, which includes taking several education-related courses, is what factors into the number of actingships, he said.

Principals and vice principals will be evaluated on their progress in this aspect in February.

"That's what we're faced with," Diaz said. "It would be nice to allow school administrators more time. Right now, it's a two-year time frame. Two years is a short amount of time."

According to the Pacific region education report, 16.7 percent of CNMI principals, or two of the 12 principals, were certified at the elementary level during the 2007-2008 school year. Twenty-five percent, or two of eight principals, at the secondary level were certified during the same year.

In comparison, all 23 American Samoa elementary principals were certified, while 98 percent of Guam principals and 98.9 percent of Hawaii's principals were certified during the 2007-2008 school year, according to the report.

For secondary principals, all six principals in American Samoa were certified, as were all 86 in Hawaii. Eleven of the 12, or 91.7 percent, of the principals in Guam were certified.

None of the principals in the Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia or Palau were certified because those jurisdictions do not require certification, according to the report.

The CNMI is one of only three jurisdictions—the other two being American Samoa and Guam—that requires a master's degree for certification, according to the report. The CNMI is also the only jurisdiction that requires principals to pass both PRAXIS I and II. Hawaii requires passing its own test while Guam requires that principals pass only PRAXIS I, according to the report.

The CNMI, American Samoa, Guam and Hawaii are the only jurisdictions requiring principal certification.

Palau community marks Independence Day

From Page 1

Saipan packed the Micro Beach Pavilion inside the American Memorial Park, with Shmull as their guest of honor.

Shmull congratulated the island's Palauan community for their effort to hold the event on an annual basis despite being away from home.

Palau gained its independence from the United States in 1994 under a Compact of Free Association.

There are about 300 Palauans on Saipan. The celebration was marked by inspiring speeches and the traditional potluck that included turkey, fish, taro, tapioca, and other Palauan delicacies.

The other Palauans leading the celebration were Pastor Ted Ngewakl, Honorary Consul for Palau on Saipan Joe Lifoifoi, PCA vice president Norman Mabel and event organizing committee chair Rita Kazuma.

PCA president Rufino Aguon was not able to attend because he is in Guam, coaching the CNMI national junior basketball team in the ongoing Oceania championships.

Former Palau senator Steven Kanai, who is seeking to return to his old post in the November general elections, also showed up earlier in the day.

The Governor of the outlying State of Angaur, Horace Rafael, was also present to ask for support in his bid for a seat in the House of Delegates.

Shmull said that even before foreign countries ruled his country, Palau has always been independent.

Thus, he said, the right term is "we have regained our independence from Saipan, Germany, Japan and the United States."

He said that contrary to the claims of some politicians during the recent primary elections that nothing had been done by past administrations, there had been a lot of infrastructure projects that spurred economic development in Palau since it regained independence.

He said after the Palau constitution became effective in 1981, the leaders were able to work on basic infrastructure projects.

He said it was during the time of President Lazarus Salii that the retirement program was established, which had a big impact on the social development of the country.

The Etpison and Nakamura and Remengesau presidencies, he said, have led to unprecedented economic growth because even before the "Compact Road" was completed, there were already access roads being worked out.

He recalled that it was during the Nakamura administration that the Compact money became available but before that he said the U.S. government required Palau to submit an Economic Development Plan. The EDP had to be scrutinized by the U.S. Congress before any funds would be made available.

Following the signing of the Compact of Free Association in 1994, the U.S. agreed to provide millions of financial assistance to Palau in education, economic and social services that will last for 15 years, which means this would expire in 2009.

Palau and the U.S. are scheduled to conduct a review of the financial package in February next year.

The COFA money, Shmull said, is a crucial to the further improvement of basic services like roads, water system and electricity, not only in the town center but in the outlying areas.

He said that investors will become confident if "we have these basic infrastructures."

He recalled that the "Compact Road," so called because the money that was spent to build the 5.3-mile highway in the biggest island of Babeldaob came from the COFA fund, was originally intended by the U.S. government for an access road to the military camps during the Trust Territory days.

"Our past leaders were able to negotiate this with the U.S. as their legacy in Palau," he said.

Fitial to talk with lawmakers on CUC privatization

From Page 1

Gov. Benigno Fitial's veto of the bill, requiring CUC to privatize its power system through a bidding progress, as opposed to a "request for proposals." It provides a $250 million price tag that prospective private sector buyers must pay in order to acquire CUC. Further, it gives CUC the power to settle disputes with the Commonwealth Development Authority by issuing $45 million in preferred stock.

The move will take away from one of CUC's goals: affordable power, Muña said.

"Anyone coming in can see [that] costs have to be paid for by customers," he said, listing fuel, payroll, chlorine, and administration as examples. "All of that is customer driven. I only collect what I can charge for."

Rates will go up because the principal needs to be recovered, he said. Even over a 40-year period, $2 million must be recovered through customers each month, accounting for an 8- to 10-cent rate increase, he added.

For the month of October, CUC residential customers are paying 33.7 cents per kilowatt-hour for the fluctuating fuel rate. The all-time high was set in August when customers were paying 41.3 cents per kWh. In May, CUC more than doubled the rates per kWh for residential customers.

"Where is the affordability in that structure?" Muña asked.

Another stipulation in the law, reinstating the eight-member board of directors, will cost the public, because board operating costs and salaries must be taken into account, Muña said.

He said he agrees with some the efforts to improve customer service, connections and reconnections.

"All those things I understand. I'm a customer, too," he pointed out, adding that those improvements cost money.

Muña said he, along with Fitial, need to sit down and talk with legislative members.

"Let's make reliability and affordability happen," he said. "It can't be from the Legislature's standpoint. It's a one-sided affair. They need to hear from us. They need to really come to terms."

Muña said that Fitial is spearheading the effort to discuss the issue with the Legislature.

Charles Reyes, press secretary for the Governor's Office, said he expects the discussions to take place shortly.

"We do have some very serious concerns, " he said. "We want to be able to have a reasonable dialogue."

Meanwhile, Muña said CUC received two bids to repair engine 7 at Power Plant 1. The bidding process ended last week. Evaluators will now make recommendations, and a decision should be ready by next week.

Bush signs $700M bailout bill into law

From Page 1

urgent warnings from Bush that the country confronted the gravest economic disaster since the Great Depression if lawmakers failed to act.

"We have acted boldly to help prevent the crisis on Wall Street from becoming a crisis in communities across our country," Bush said shortly after the plan cleared Congress, although he conceded, "our economy continues to face serious challenges."

The vote was a striking turnaround from the measure's spectacular failure earlier in the week, which had triggered a massive stock sell-off and prompted jittery lawmakers—fearing a crushing economic contagion that was spreading to their constituents—to reconsider.

"Let's not kid ourselves: We're in the midst of a recession. It's going to be a rough ride, but it will be a whole lot rougher ride" without the rescue plan, said Rep. John A. Boehner, R-Ohio, the minority leader, as he prepared to cast his vote for the most sweeping federal intervention in markets in decades.

Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson pledged quick action to get the program up and operating.

The bailout, which gives the government broad authority to buy up toxic mortgage-related investments and other distressed assets from tottering financial institutions, is designed to ease a credit crunch that began on Wall Street but is engulfing businesses around the nation.

"In these past two weeks, we've seen things we never thought we would see before in terms of the economic insecurity of our own country," said House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif. She said the measure would "begin to shape the financial stability of our country and the economic security of our people."

Rep. Barney Frank, D-Mass., the Financial Services Committee chairman, said the rescue bill was just the beginning of a much larger task Congress will tackle next year: overhauling housing policy and financial regulation in a legislative effort he compared to the New Deal.

"We were the EMTs rushing to the rescue of an economy that suddenly found itself choking, but now we have to perform more serious reform," Frank said.

Just four days earlier, the previous version of the bill went down in defeat, largely at the hands of angry conservative Republicans. On Friday, a total of 33 Democrats and 25 Republicans switched from opposition to support. In all, 91 Republicans joined 172 Democrats to support the measure while 108 Republicans and 63 Democrats voted "no."

The reversal reflected a high-stakes political environment just four weeks before Election Day. Some lawmakers were worried about their own jobs, but others—mostly Democrats—focused on the prospect that a new president could have a far more significant effect on the economy than any one piece of legislation.

Several of the Democratic switchers were members of the Congressional Black Caucus who said they changed course after securing commitments from presidential candidate Barack Obama that he would back legislation to help struggling consumers and homeowners facing foreclosures if he wins the White House.

"It's not too often you get the future president telling you that his priority matches your priority," said Rep. Elijah Cummings, D-Md., one of 13 black lawmakers who switched from "no" to "yes."

Republican presidential candidate John McCain also lobbied for the measure, according to aides who declined to say whom he called.

Rep. Roy Blunt, R-Mo., the party vote-counter, said McCain phoned Rep. John Shadegg, a fellow Arizonan who switched to "yes."

The legislation's roller-coaster ride through Congress began at a somber meeting in Pelosi's office in mid-September where Paulson and Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke frightened senior Democrats and Republicans with their warnings of an impending economic collapse without quick legislative action.

As lawmakers scrambled to draft a bill, they were barraged by angry calls from constituents to reject what many saw as a huge giveaway to the very financial institutions that helped cause the subprime mortgage meltdown at the root of the economic crisis—with nothing to help its ordinary victims.

"Pray for our republic," intoned Rep. Marcy Kaptur, D-Ohio, a leading opponent of the measure. "She's being placed in very uncaring and greedy hands."

Supporters said the prospect of economic disaster superseded their political fears.

"I may lose this race over this vote, but that's OK with me," said Republican Rep. Sue Myrick of North Carolina, who switched her vote to favor the measure. "This is the right vote for the country."

After the breathtaking House defeat on Monday, Senate leaders took custody of the rescue, adding on $110 billion in tax breaks designed to attract additional support. They attached the overall measure to a popular bill mandating broader mental health coverage in the insurance industry.

The rescue measure was changed to lift, from $100,000 to $250,000, the cap on government bank deposit insurance—a key priority for Republicans. Also key to winning GOP support was a decision by the Securities and Exchange Commission to ease accounting rules that require financial institutions to show the deflated value of assets on their balance sheets.

The revised measure won Senate approval Wednesday night, 74-25, setting up a furious round of lobbying in the House as the administration, congressional leaders, the presidential candidates and outside groups joined forces behind the measure.

The maneuvers worked—augmented by a shift in public opinion that occurred after the stock market took its largest-ever one-day dive on Monday.

The plan—initially a three-page request from the Bush administration for unlimited power to use $700 billion any way it saw fit to stabilize markets—swelled to more than 450 pages as negotiators added restrictions for the administration and sweeteners for anxious members of Congress.

Senate resets hearing on public lands issue

A Senate hearing on public land issues was postponed Friday after Public Lands Secretary John S. Del Rosario declined an invitation to testify, saying there were more important things that need his attention.

Del Rosario

The Senate Committee on Resources, Economic Development and Programs has rescheduled the hearing for Tuesday, Oct. 7, at 10am. The purpose of the meeting is to gather information on issues related to homesteads, land compensation, and commercial land leases.

In addition to Del Rosario, the witnesses asked to testify at the hearing are assistant attorney general Brad Huesman, who serves as legal counsel for the Department of Public Lands, and Public Works Secretary Diego B. Songsong.

Del Rosario in a letter to Sen. Jude Hofschneider, the chairman of the Senate committee, said he could not attend the Friday hearing because he was "heavily saddled with several substantive issues requiring my full attention."

Del Rosario said there are major investors asking for information from the DPL. He also cited the situation with Rota Resort, whose new owners the DPL recently threatened to sue for failing to obtain government approval for the purchase of the 600-acre complex. DPL also needs to fast track the pre-qualification criteria for residential homestead applicants on Tinian and Saipan and the permitting process for the proposed landfill for Tinian, the department head said.

"These are very pressing issues and I need to take advantage of opportunities to resolve them forthwith," Del Rosario said.

On Thursday, the Senate passed a bill that aims to put DPL in the hands of a board of directors rather than an appointed secretary. Hofschneider, who sponsored the bill, has accused DPL of being slow and unresponsive on critical issues like homesteading and commercial land leasing. He has also said the legislation would lend a higher level of transparency to DPL's decision-making.

A board of directors ran DPL's predecessor, the Marianas Public Lands Authority. In 2006, the Legislature abolished MPLA amid allegations of misuse of public funds and abuse of power. ***(Agnes E. Donato)***

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King Car Food Ind. Co., Ltd.
ANNOUNCEMENT

Regarding the incident of tainted 3-in-1 instant coffees recently, King Car sincerely apologizes to all the consumers for causing any anxiety, and truly appreciates for those who support King Car for a long time.

King Car hereby solemnly declares that the current act of recall is restricted for "3 in 1 mixed powder" products ONLY. We also guarantee that the milk powder used in all canned coffee series products is sourced from New Zealand and Australia for over 25 years. No trace of Melamine is found in random samples after the inspections. Moreover, none of milk derivatives is used in any other items under the brand of King Car. Hence, ALL CANNED MR. BROWN COFFEES AND KING CAR TEA SERIES ARE NOT AFFECTED BY THE RECALL, AND ABSOLUTELY SAFE FOR HUMAN CONSUMPTION.

King Car Food Ind. Co., Ltd.

/s/
Chief of Export Dept. Mark Weng

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Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
Volume XVIII, Issue No. 279

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EDITORIAL

The Joe and Sarah Show

Republicans can now remove their hands from their eyes. Gov. Sarah Palin shared a stage with Sen. Joe Biden and for 90 minutes skirted the edge of the abyss but avoided the plunge. Luckily for her, their debate Thursday night avoided serious civics—no questions about Supreme Court rulings and only the briefest exposition on what constitutes the vice presidency. She did nothing to arrest her slide from phenomenon to embarrassment, but her conservative supporters, many jumping ship in recent days, can take solace that she correctly pronounced the names of several world leaders.

In avoiding catastrophe, she was aided by Biden, whose looping answers drifted along a current known only to him. His best friend was the clock.

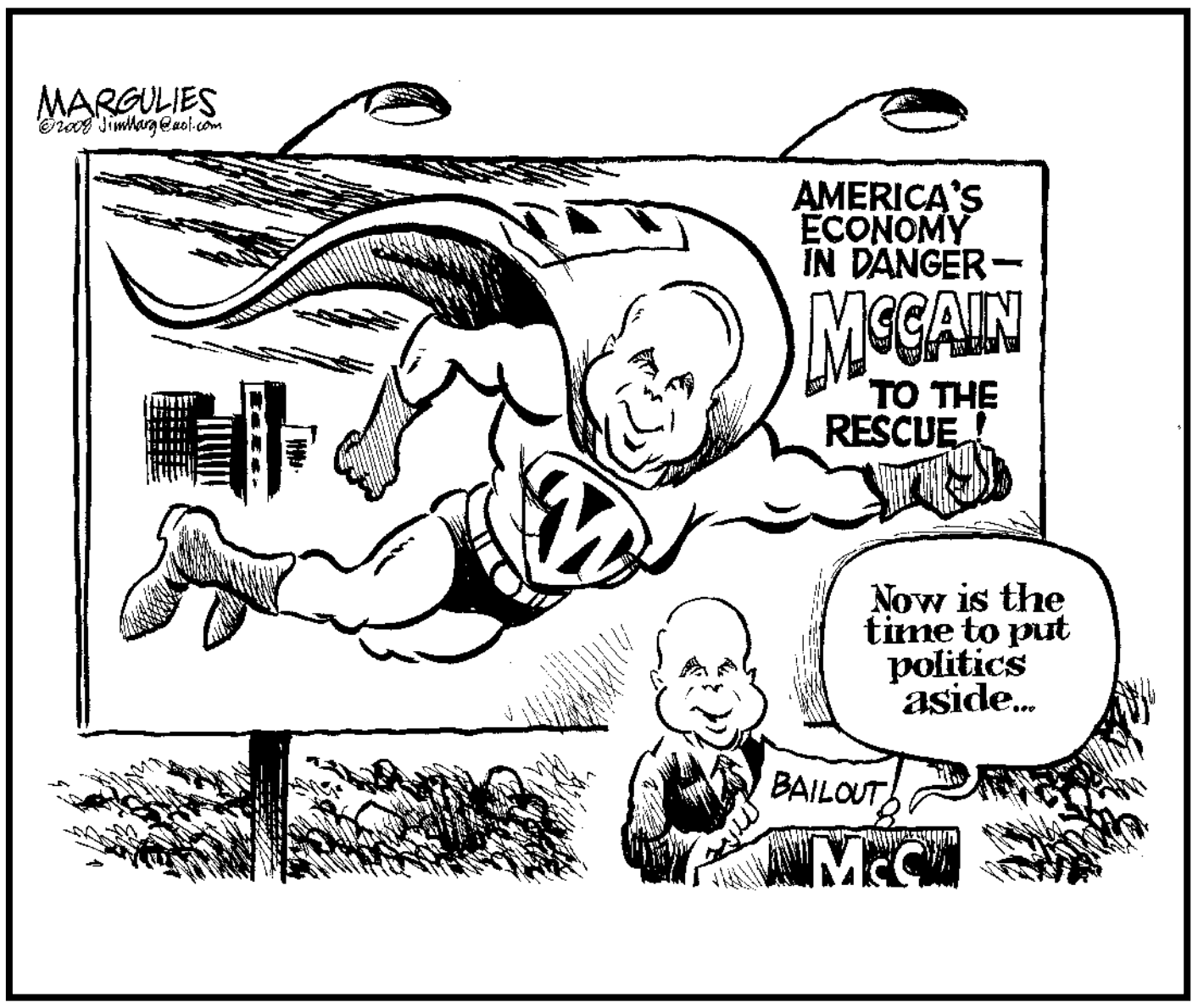
If these two candidates—aided and abetted by the singularly inarticulate work of moderator Gwen Ifill—combined to produce one of the worst debates in modern American presidential history, they did at least reveal the goals of the participants, as Palin reached for folksiness and Biden appealed to the cerebral. "Darn right we need tax relief," said one. "We have a different value set," said the other. Guess who said which?

In one sense, both of those efforts were authentic. Palin has every right to be considered an everywoman; no one can deny how average she is. And Biden is entitled to some claim on intellect; he's spent many years in Washington arguing complex issues, to mixed results. But both stepped on their message. Palin's attempts to seem regular drew so heavily from her script that she revealed more about her handlers than herself. And Biden's syntax made it hard to credit him with anything approaching genius.

Beyond style, the debate did have its moments. They sparred vigorously over Iraq—Biden archly pointed out that Palin presented no plan at all, and she smugly accused him of raising a "white flag of surrender." One smaller but revealing moment occurred on the margins of the main topics. Asked about climate change, this was Palin's reply: "I'm not one to attribute every man—activity of man to the changes in the climate. There is something to be said also for man's activities, but also for the cyclical temperature changes on our planet. But there are real changes going on in our climate. And I don't want to argue about the causes." Understandably.

In the end, Biden left voters with a more constructive vision of the government and a more compelling case for how it has failed the nation under President Bush. Palin stumbled around the question of how much to embrace and how much to reject that failed administration. She insisted that she's part of a "team of mavericks," but said little about what that team would do. It was not a reassuring night. Thankfully, the presidential candidates return to the stage next week.

(c) 2008, Los Angeles Times



If only the bail-out had been called a rescue

Editor's Note: This originally came out in BBC Magazine, with no author's name.

The trouble with America's $700 billion bailout is the "B" word itself—bail-out, say advertising chiefs. Branding expert Jonathan Gabay considers how a little creative story-telling could have saved a whole lot of financial turmoil.

It has, according to some of the sharpest advertising minds in America, a "failure of branding". Had President George Bush concentrated on the word "rescue" when selling the $700bn "bail-out" package, say ad chiefs, the plan might have sailed through Congress rather than first being rejected.

Paradoxically in his address to the nation on 24 September, a somber President Bush didn't even mention the "B" word . Instead he said: "I propose that the Federal Government reduce the risk posed by [these] troubled assets and supply urgently-needed money so banks and other financial institutions can avoid collapse and resume lending.

"This rescue effort is not aimed at preserving any individual company or industry. It is aimed at preserving America's overall economy."

What he only once referred to as a "rescue" the world's press, and many members of the House of Representatives, interpreted and damned as a "bail-out". The House promptly voted down the plan on Monday.

Expressions like "bail-out" imply failure and breakdown—the utter antithesis of the home-grown virtuous American dream of success and foresight.

Arguably from a branding perspective, President Bush's advisors could have come up with a clearer message of intent. Branding experts such as Andrew Bennett, chief executive of Euro RSCG—which claims to be the "largest global ad agency as measured by total number of accounts"—have suggested that the White House should have simplified the president's message.

Others in the marketing community believe that the $700bn proposal should have been sold to the American public in terms of an act of selfless heroism.

In such a case spin-doctors could have repackaged the emergency in the equivalent terms of a movie trailer, according the US National Media Group. The American people would have been presented the image of the kind yet tough New York firefighter daring to face the deadly backdraft—all to rescue the weakened economy from the roaring flames of recession.

George and dragon

Alternatively branding people could have re-pitched the crisis in terms of a David versus Goliath battle. Here, outrage is expressed against the giant "wicked warlocks of Wall Street" in need of a sharp lesson meted out by the simple community of god-fearing Americans (the "Davids") inspired by their leader George—the dragon slayer. (A subtle homage to the special UK/US relationship.)

The argument goes that if the president would have realigned his national address in the kind of positive terms used at the beginning of the "war on Terror", at the very least he could avoided being demeaned by politicians on Capitol Hill who initially rejected his "rescue" plan.

Within 12 hours of the fall of the Twin Towers in in 2001 President Bush promised immediate and positive rescue tactics. His speech repeatedly affirmed his assertive leadership to rescue rather than redeem.

For example: "I implemented our government's emergency response plans. Our military is powerful, and it's prepared. Our emergency teams are working in New York City and Washington, DC to help with local rescue efforts."

Whilst no one should directly compare the human horror of 9/11 to the current financial shakedown, it is interesting to consider how sometimes a president—or any leader—is perceived not simply by what is said, but how a message is delivered and so understood.

Gotta have soul

The same is true in any branding exercise. From marketing sports to politicians, the art of branding isn't simply about catchphrases or logos—at its heart is the soul of a message. At the centre of it all is a simple meaning that is explained and detailed in full.

Ironically it was President Bush himself who once said: "In my line of work you got to keep repeating things over and over and over again for the truth to sink in."

In today's sound-bite society such an approach should be taken for granted as a "101" lesson for any politician wishing to highlight a message to the press who report meaning, along with the public who judge that meaning's merits and value.

Tony Blair understood this when he said, "Education, education, education". Martin Luther King understood it when repeated and explained his "dream".

Whoever gets into the White House next may want to keep in mind that in terms of branding, sometimes the best way be rescued from having to bail out of bad situation is to take a repeat course in good old fashioned plain talking.

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Palin delivers, but doubt not erased

By DAN BALZ
(c) 2008, The Washington Post

ST. LOUIS—Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin spent much of the past two weeks on the defensive, hounded by critics over halting performances in television interviews and questioned even by conservative writers doubtful about whether she is ready to be vice president.

But the Palin who showed up for Thursday's debate against Democratic Sen. Joe Biden was anything but defensive. In a fast-paced exchange about a range of domestic and foreign policy issues, she was the aggressive campaigner who in the first weeks of her candidacy had so energized the Republican faithful.

As a result, what was touted as a moment of truth for Palin instead turned into a lively and civil argument between the two vice presidential nominees over the policies and records of Sens. John McCain and Barack Obama. For 90 minutes, they sparred over Iraq and Afghanistan, energy and global warming, the economy and taxes, and which candidate would do more to protect the middle class.

One debate will not erase doubts that have been building about Palin's capacity to serve as vice president, but the effect of the encounter may shift the focus away from the sideshow that Palin has become and put it back on the two presidential nominees and what they would do for the country. Thursday's debate adds to the importance of the two remaining presidential debates, the first of which will be held Tuesday.

Change of focus

Palin produced at a moment McCain needed it most. In the past two weeks, his standing has deteriorated as the focus of national attention has shifted almost entirely to the economy. National and state polls show Obama gaining ground, and the preface to the debate Thursday was the news that McCain is pulling out of Michigan, once seen as a potential pickup.

She has done so twice, the first time coming at the Republican National Convention when she blunted growing criticism with a strong performance that lit up Republican hearts. But whether that will be enough to change the direction of a race that looks increasingly difficult for the Republicans is another story.

Biden did all he could Thursday to make sure that would not happen. If Palin was the surprise, he was the steady and experienced voice. She brought liveliness but he was looking to reassure voters who may have their own questions about Obama's readiness. If that resonated, Biden will have produced dividends for Obama and the Democrats.

For Palin detractors who expected a meltdown onstage at Washington University, the night was a disappointment. Republican strategists not directly connected with the campaign, some of whom had low expectations about how she would do, were thrilled by her performance. And if Biden's detractors hoped he would be windy or overbearing, they, too, were disappointed. He showed off his three decades of Washington experience in a way designed to reassure voters about himself and Obama.

Appealing

Palin and Biden were each appealing in their own way—and in ways that neither McCain nor Obama were in their first debate last Friday. Palin wore a bright smile throughout the exchange and carried herself with confidence. McCain at times seemed testy and spent 90 minutes avoiding looking at Obama, but Palin directed her comments at her opponent and made eye contact. "Can I call you Joe?" she asked him as they strode across the stage for the traditional handshake during the introductions.

Biden was direct, not verbose, and his answers came crisply in contrast to Obama's more studied and sometimes pausing style of speaking. That he knew his brief was less surprising, given his experience, but he avoided speaking in the kind of senatorial vernacular that often hampers someone who has been in the capital as long as he has. And he, too, flashed his smile to good effect.

Palin, who struggled with questions in televised interviews, came to Thursday's debate well briefed. She did not stumble over names of foreign leaders. She had quick comebacks when Biden challenged her or went after McCain.

She also came with a game plan. Time and again, she invoked her small-town roots, her status as a Washington outsider and her connections as a hockey and soccer mom. If you want Washington changed, she said, send two mavericks to clean things up. "I think we need a little bit of reality from Wasilla Main Street there, brought to Washington, D.C.," she said.

She also sought to gain sympathy from the national television audience as someone who has been under fire from elites and her Democratic opponents. "I may not answer the questions that either the moderator or you want to hear, but I'm going to talk straight to the American people and let them know my track record," she said.

Link to Bush

Biden also came with a plan, which was to pin McCain to President Bush and argue that if voters really want change, it will come only through the election of the Democratic ticket. He made that point about McCain on the economy and taxes but he was most forceful when the discussion turned to foreign policy.

Each time Biden sought to link McCain to Bush, Palin countered by accusing him of looking backward. "For a ticket that wants to talk about change and looking into the future, there's just too much finger-pointing backwards to ever make us believe that that's where you're going," she said. "Positive change is coming, though. Reform of government is coming. We'll learn from the past mistakes in this administration and other administrations."

Biden pushed back hard in response, arguing that past is prologue. "The issue is: How different is John McCain's policy going to be than George Bush's? I haven't heard anything yet," he said. "I haven't heard how his policy is going to be different on Iran than George Bush's. I haven't heard how his policy is going to be different with Israel than George Bush's. I haven't heard how his policy in Afghanistan is going to be different than George Bush's. I haven't heard how his policy in Pakistan is going to be different than George Bush's."

Partisan lines

Reactions to the debate among political strategists fell almost predictably along partisan lines. But even some Democrats said Palin handled herself well. "The VP is no longer an issue," said Democrat Tad Devine. "Joe did well, too, especially at the end. I think there will no longer be a sideshow for the VP."

Other Democrats said that as well as she may have done, she probably did not sway undecided voters. "For people who were already inclined to vote for John McCain, there was nothing about Sarah Palin's performance to keep them from doing that," Democrat Geoff Garin said. "But McCain's problem is that there aren't enough people who are inclined to vote for him, and nothing about Palin's performance changed that, either."

But Republicans had a positive reaction, as if a weight had been lifted off McCain's shoulders. "She delivered big-time," said Tom Rath, a New Hampshire-based GOP strategist. "It was the best 90 minutes this campaign has had in two weeks. ... Whatever expectations there were, she blew them away."

The vice presidential debate came with high interest and big expectations and certainly delivered, though not as some had predicted. That leaves it to Obama and McCain to argue it out for the next 32 days.

Joe, and Sarah Six-Pack

By DANA MILBANK
(c) 2008, The Washington Post

ST. LOUIS—This week, Sarah Palin gave a curious rationale for her candidacy. "It's time," the Republican vice presidential nominee said, "that normal Joe Six-Pack American is finally represented in the position of vice presidency."

When she took the stage Thursday night here at Washington University for the vice presidential debate, Sarah Six-Pack all but popped open a cold one. Wearing a glittery flag pin on her jacket, she blew a kiss toward the audience. She gave a wave that Tina Fey would probably describe as adorable. Then she regarded her Democratic foe, the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

"Nice to meet you," Palin told Joe Biden. "Hey, can I call you Joe?"

"You can call me Joe," the senator obliged.

"OK, thanks," she said brightly.

"Thank you," Biden replied.

"Thank you," she told him again. "Thank you, Gwen," she told moderator Gwen Ifill. "Thank you, thank you, thank you," she told nobody in particular.

It was going to be a long evening.

Palin's intellectual fitness had been put into question by her disastrous interview with Katie Couric, which was filled with panicked silences, flustered non-answers and even a promise to get back to the interviewer with more information. But when Palin took the stage with Biden last night for what may have been the most public IQ test ever administered, she had no problem meeting the exceptionally low expectations. She had talking points adequate to fill the 90 seconds on the various topics Ifill tossed her way, and often forced Biden to defend Barack Obama.

On the other hand, it wasn't exactly a confidence-builder. Palin, in her 90 minutes on the stage Thursday night, left the firm impression that she is indeed ready to lead the nation—with an unnerving mixture of platitudes and cute, folksy phrases that poured from her lips even when they bore no relation to the questions asked.

"Let's commit ourselves just every day American people, Joe Six-Pack, hockey moms across the nation," she proposed when asked about the mortgage crisis.

"I want to go back to the energy plan," she said when asked about the federal bailout plan.

"I want to talk about, again, my record on energy," she said when asked about bankruptcy.

Biden grew frustrated. "If you notice, Gwen, the governor did not answer the question."

Replied Sarah Six-Pack: "I may not answer the questions that either the moderator or you want to hear, but I'm going to talk straight to the American people."

And, indeed, she stared into the camera, largely ignoring Ifill, Biden and the audience.

On occasion, she unilaterally revised policy for John McCain, as when she said Iran's Mahmoud Ahmadinejad "is not one whom we can allow to acquire nuclear energy, nuclear weapons." At other times, her answers defied comprehension, as when Ifill asked about her trigger for using nuclear weapons. "Nuclear weaponry, of course, would be the be-all, end-all of just too many people in too many parts of our planet, so those dangerous regimes, again, cannot be allowed to acquire nuclear weapons, period," she answered.

Iffy, but not the alarming sort of answers she gave Couric on CBS. Then, Palin couldn't identify what newspapers or magazines she reads, couldn't cite a Supreme Court decision she disagreed with other than Roe V. Wade,

or any regulatory effort McCain had supported. Asked to name a favorite vice president, she cited Geraldine Ferraro.

In the canned debate format, Palin's platitudes held up better than under Couric's follow-up questions. "Oh yeah, it's so obvious I'm a Washington outsider," she said with a shy grin when Ifill asked about putting troops in Darfur. "And someone just not used to the way you guys operate." Asked about the possibility that she would assume the presidency if the president died in office, she found herself saying, "I think we need a little bit of reality from Wasilla Main Street there, brought to Washington, D.C."

When Ifill said she was changing the subject to foreign policy, Palin tilted her head to the side, gave a slight shrug and made a wary grin. Still, even then, she was able to fill up all 90 seconds of her allotted response time. "Um, your plan is a white flag of surrender in Iraq," she told Biden in a playground taunt. "You guys opposed the `surge.' "

Smiling through entire sentences, she was relentlessly folksy and unafraid of the trite. The credit squeeze, she said, is "affecting Main Streeters like me." On Middle East policy: "I'm so encouraged to know that we both love Israel."

Predatory mortgages a problem? "Darn right," she said. Tax relief? "Darn right."

Ifill asked Palin if there were any campaign promises she would have to scale back because of the financial crisis. "How long have I been at this?" Palin shot back. "Like, five weeks?"

When backed into uncomfortable terrain, such as defending the Bush administration's economic record, she exploded into cliche and nonsequitur: "Say it ain't so, Joe. There you go again pointing backwards again. ... Now doggone it, let's look ahead." Before finishing her answer, she mentioned her "brother, who I think is the best schoolteacher in the year, and here's a shout-out to all those third-graders at Gladys Wood Elementary School, you get extra credit for watching the debate."

"Everybody gets extra credit tonight," the moderator assured Sarah Six-Pack. "We're going to move on to the next question."

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam Homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY
Mostly cloudy with isolated showers and thunderstorms. Northeast winds 10 to 15 mph.	Mostly cloudy with isolated showers and thunderstorms. Northeast winds 10 to 15 mph.	Mostly cloudy with isolated showers and thunderstorms.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲85° ▼76°	▲85° ▼76°	▲85° ▼76°	▲85° ▼76°	▲84° ▼76°

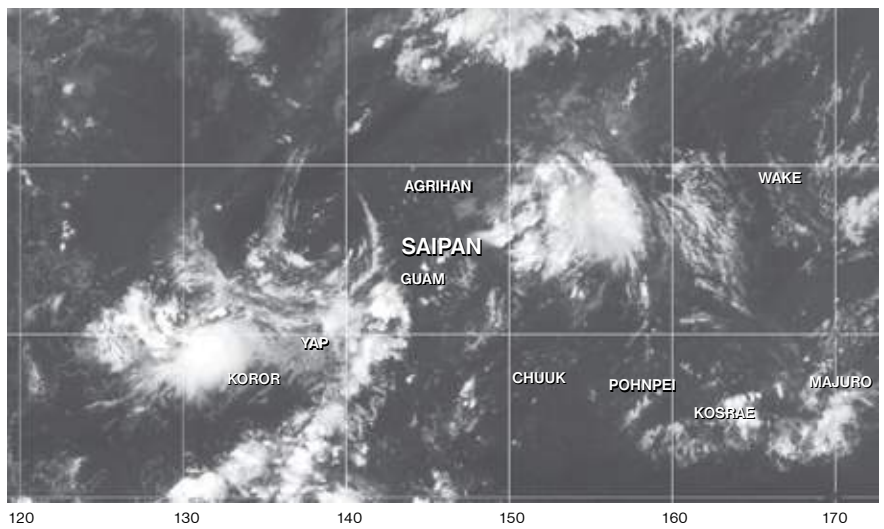
Micronesia

Guam and Rota	Mostly Cloudy	▲85	▼76
Palau	Cloudy	▲87	▼77
Yap	Cloudy	▲87	▼77
Chuuk	Thunderstorms	▲87	▼78
Pohnpei	Cloudy	▲88	▼73
Kosrae	Cloudy	▲88	▼76
Majuro	Mostly Cloudy	▲85	▼75

Around The Globe

Auckland	Showers	▲64	▼56
Beijing	Rain	▲68	▼55
Hong Kong	Rain	▲82	▼75
Honolulu	Showers	▲83	▼75
London	Rain	▲66	▼59
Los Angeles	Partly Sunny	▲74	▼58
Manila	Mostly Cloudy	▲88	▼77
Melbourne	Sunny	▲64	▼48
Miami	Thundershowers	▲85	▼76
New York	Mostly Sunny	▲65	▼49
Osaka	Rain	▲76	▼65
Paris	Rain	▲62	▼51
Pusan	Mostly Cloudy	▲73	▼59
Rome	Sunny	▲65	▼50
Salem	Mostly Cloudy	▲63	▼45
San Francisco	Mostly Sunny	▲70	▼55
Seoul	Cloudy	▲70	▼54
Tokyo	Cloudy	▲71	▼64
Washington, DC	Mostly Sunny	▲70	▼53

Yesterday's Satellite Image



PICTURE TIME: 1:00PM, SATURDAY, OCTOBER 4, 2008
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A surface trough extends northeastward from a weak circulation centered at 11N130E to 18N145E then eastward to end at 17N155E. Scattered showers and thunderstorms associated with the circulation are found northwest of Palau or west of a line from 7N133E to 12N135E. Scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms associated with the trough are occurring east of the Northern Marianas between 14N and 21N from 149E to 158E. Another surface trough curves southward from 11N138E to 5N142E to EQ138E. Winds converging near the trough are producing scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms southwest of Guam in an area bounded by a line from 13N138E to 13N144E to 9N144E to EQ140E to EQ130E to 7N139E back to 13N138E. Trade-wind convergence is producing widely scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms from just south of Pohnpei eastward across Kosrae to south of Majuro or within 140 miles of a line from 4N158E to 5N171E. An upper-level low centered northeast of Wake Atoll at 22N172E is triggering widely scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms in an area bounded by a line from 21N169E to 24N178E to 15N171E back to 21N169E.

Tides

Saipan Harbor

5:11AM Today	Low Tide:	0.0 Feet
12:31PM Today	High Tide:	1.6 Feet
5:44PM Today	Low Tide:	1.3 Feet
10:05PM Today	High Tide:	1.6 Feet

Sunrise/Sunset

Today	6:07AM	6:03 PM
Monday	6:07AM	6:03 PM
Tuesday	6:07AM	6:02 PM
Wednesday	6:08AM	6:01 PM
Thursday	6:08AM	6:01 PM

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	10:54AM	10:11PM
Monday	11:54AM	11:03PM
Tuesday	12:33PM	11:56PM
Wednesday	1:19PM	
Thursday	2:02PM	12:49AM

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF OCTOBER 1, 2008

DEPARTURES

Saipan-Rota

CO9597	11:50am	12:25pm	1,7

Saipan-Guam

CO9317	4:00am	4:50am	Daily
CO9313	8:30am	9:20am	Daily
CO9597	11:50am	1:20pm	1,7 via Rota
CO9601	12:30pm	1:20pm	Daily
CO9603	3:30pm	4:20pm	Daily
CO9605	6:30pm	7:20pm	Daily
CO9599	9:30pm	10:20pm	Daily

Saipan-Narita

NW 099	5:00am	7:30am	Daily
NW 078	8:55am	2:00pm	Daily
NW 075	4:55pm	7:25pm	Daily

Saipan-Osaka

NW 083	4:20pm	6:55pm	Daily

Saipan-Nagoya

NW 078	8:55am	11:35am	Daily

Saipan-Seoul

OZ 604	2:20am	6:00am	1
OZ 604	2:50am	6:30am	2,3,4,5,6,7
OZ 606	3:30pm	7:00pm	2,4,6,7

Saipan-Busan

OZ 608	3:50am	7:20am	1,5

Saipan-Shanghai

FM 844	3:15am	5:55am	2,6

Rota-Guam

CO 9597	12:50pm	1:20pm	1,7

Guam-Manila

CO 893	5:50pm	9:10pm	3,5 via Koror
CO 933	7:00pm	8:40pm	Daily
PR 111	6:00am	7:45am	1,2,4,6,7

ARRIVALS

Rota-Saipan

CO 9598	3:25am	4:00am	5,6

Guam-Saipan

CO 9316	2:30am	3:20am	Daily
CO9598	2:30am	4:00am	5,6 via Rota
CO9596	7:00am	7:50am	Daily
CO9600	10:20am	11:10am	Daily
CO9602	2:00pm	2:50pm	Daily
CO9604	5:00pm	5:50pm	Daily
CO9606	8:00pm	8:50pm	Daily

Narita-Saipan

NW 076	10:15am	2:50pm	Daily
NW 077	6:25pm	1:30am+1	Daily
NW 100	8:45pm	1:20am+1	Daily

Osaka-Saipan

NW 084	10:30am	3:05pm	Daily

Nagoya-Saipan

NW 077	9:00pm	1:30am+1	Daily

Seoul-Saipan

OZ 605	9:00am	2:20pm	Daily
OZ 603	7:40pm	1:00am+1	7
OZ 603	8:10pm	1:30am+1	1,2,3,4,5,6

Busan-Saipan

OZ 607	9:30pm	2:50am+1	4,7

Shanghai-Saipan

FM 843	7:50pm	2:15am+1	1,5

Guam-Rota

CO 9598	2:30am	3:00am	5,6

Manila-Guam

CO 892	10:10pm	5:30am+1	3,5 via Koror
CO 934	10:55pm	4:30am+1	Daily
PR 110	10:20pm	4:00am+1	1,3,5,6,7

Editor's Note: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); CO: Continental; PR: Philippine Airlines; CZ: China Southern; CA: Air China; NW: Northwest; JO: Japan Airlines; OZ: Asiana; MU: China Eastern ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

FREEDOM AIR FLIGHT SCHEDULE

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
Guam-Rota			
FRE 100	7:00am	7:30am	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 100	7:50am	8:20am	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 200	9:00am	9:30am	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 200	9:50am	10:15am	Daily
Guam-Rota			
FRE 300	4:00pm	4:30pm	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 300	4:50pm	5:25pm	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 400	6:00pm	6:30pm	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 400	6:45pm	7:15pm	Daily
Saipan-Tinian			
FRE 101	6:45am	6:55am	Daily
FRE 103	7:30am	7:40am	Daily
FRE 105	8:00am	8:10am	Daily
FRE 107	8:40am	8:50am	Daily
FRE 109*	9:10am	9:20am	Daily
FRE 111*	10:45am	10:55am	Daily

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
FRE 113	11:40am	11:50am	Daily
FRE 115	1:00pm	1:10pm	Daily
FRE 117	2:30pm	2:40pm	Daily
FRE 119	4:00pm	4:10pm	Daily
FRE 121	4:40pm	4:50pm	Daily
FRE 123 *	5:40pm	5:50pm	Daily
FRE 125 *	6:00pm	6:10pm	Daily
Tinian-Saipan w/ connecting flights to Rota or Guam**			
FRE 102	7:05am	7:15am	Daily
FRE 104	7:50am	8:00am	Daily
FRE 106**	8:20am	8:30am	Daily
FRE 108**	9:00am	9:10am	Daily
FRE 110	10:00am	10:10am	Daily
FRE 112	11:05am	11:15am	Daily
FRE 114	12:00pm	12:10pm	Daily
FRE 116	1:30pm	1:40pm	Daily
FRE 118	2:50pm	3:00pm	Daily
FRE 120**	4:20pm	4:30pm	Daily
FRE 122**	5:00pm	5:10pm	Daily
FRE 124	6:05pm	6:15pm	Daily
FRE 126	6:20pm	6:30pm	Daily

GET YOUR PICTURES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS PUBLISHED—FOR FREE

The *Saipan Tribune* accepts for FREE publication the following:

PICTURES

- ISLAND SNAPSHOTS
  Birthdays, baptisms, christenings, family gatherings, reunions, club activities, and other community-related events.
- BIRTHDAY GREETINGS
  A way for families and friends to greet their loved ones, accompanied by a picture of the person celebrating his/her birthday.
- BUSINESS
  Corporate donations, volunteer work, promotions, granting of awards, team-building exercises, meetings and other activities by members of the business community.
- SAMU'T SARI
  Pictures from the islands' Filipino community, primarily focusing on Filipino activities, gatherings, get-togethers, volunteer work, etc.
- TRAVELOGUE
  Pictures of off-island travels. Contributors may submit up to 10 pictures for consideration.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- COMMUNITY BRIEFS
  Announcements of upcoming activities of organizations, community clubs, government agencies, and private companies.
- CAMPUS BULLETIN
  Announcements of upcoming activities in public and private schools, as well as calendar of activities. May include PTSA meetings, enrollment procedures.

REQUIREMENTS

For pictures:

- Photos should be original and not copyrighted. Contributors must have the right to allow the *Saipan Tribune* to publish the pictures.
- Digital pictures should be high-resolution (minimum of 800kb).
- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and phone number.
- Photos must have been taken in the last two months.
- For birthday greetings, must be submitted no later than 12 noon of the previous day to make it to next day's edition.

For announcements:

- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and a phone number.
- Must be submitted no later than 12 noon to make it to next day's edition.

HOW TO SUBMIT

- E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com or jayvee_vallejera@saipantribune.com.
- Fax: (670) 235-3740
- Mail: PMB 34, P.O. Box 10001, Saipan, CNMI 96950
- Drop off: 2nd Floor, CIC Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan
  To check if contributions are received, call (670) 235-6397, 235-2440, 235-8747

POLICY

- The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to accept or reject a contribution for publication; the right to edit all contributions, the date of publication, size of the picture, and page placement; and the right to publish contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats.
- The *Saipan Tribune* will decide how often community announcements are going to be published.
- For Travelogue, the *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to choose which pictures to publish.

NMI CRIME STOPPERS

Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:

- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any PTI cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.com

NEWS DESK For news tips, corrections and requests for news coverage, call (670) 235-NEWS (6397), 235-2440, fax 235,3740. E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com. Website:www.saipantribune.com.

CUSTOMER SERVICE For inquiries, purchase of back issues and complaints, call (670) 235-8747, 235-2440, fax 235-3740.

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ADVERTISING For inquiries contact (670) 235-2769. E-mail: sales@saipantribune.com

Schedule of Religious Services

CATHOLIC

Mt. Carmel Cathedral
Sunday Mass: 6am, 9am, 11am and 6pm
Monday-Saturday: 6am
Wednesday: 6am and 6pm

Korean Center
Sunday: 10:30am
Wednesday: 10am
Thursday-Friday: 8pm
Saturday: 3pm and 7:30pm

Kristo Rai Parish
Sunday Mass: 6am, 8am and 9:30am
Monday- Saturday: 6am
Wednesday: 6am and 6pm
Saturday: 6am and 6pm

Nuestra Senora De Soledad Parish
Wednesday Mass: 6pm
First Friday Healing Mass: 6pm
Saturday Mass: 6pm
Sunday Masses: 7:30am & 9am

Saint Jude Parish
Sunday: 6am, 8am, 10am
Wednesday and Thursday: 6pm

San Antonio Parish
Sunday: 6am and 8am
Tuesday and Friday: 6pm

San Francisco de Borja-Rota
Sunday: 6am and 8am
Monday-Saturday: 6am
Wednesday: 6pm

San Isidro-Rota
Sunday: 5am and 10am
Monday-Wednesday: 7pm
Thursday-Saturday: 5am and 7pm

San Jose (Oleai) Parish
Sunday: 6am and 7:30am
Tuesday-Wednesday and Friday-Saturday: 6pm

San Roque Parish
Sunday: 9am
Wednesday: 6pm
Saturday: 10:30am

San Vicente Parish
Sunday: 6am, 9am and 6pm
Monday-Saturday: 6pm

Santa Remedios
Sunday: 7:30am
Tuesday: 6pm
Saturday: 10am-Baptism

Santa Soledad
Sunday: 7:30am

PROTESTANT

Born Again Christian (Upper Room Int'l Ministries), Saipan
Wednesday Prayer and Healing Night: 8-10:30pm
Saturday Tagalog Service: 8-10:30pm
Sunday English Service: 9:30-11am
Sunday School for Children: 10-11am
Sunday Filipino Service: 7-9pm

Calvary Baptist Church, Saipan
Sunday School: 9am
Sunday Morning Worship: 10am
Sunday Evening Worship: 6pm
Wednesday Prayer Service: 7pm

Chinese Christian Church of Saipan
Worship Services: Sunday, 10am and 7:30pm
Bible Study: Tuesday-Friday, 9:25pm

Cornerstone Christian Church, Saipan
Worship/Study Opportunities
Adult Sunday School: 9am
Youth Sunday School: 9am
English Worship Service Sunday: 10am
Sunday Service: 5:30pm
Worship/Fellowship Sunday: 9:30pm
Evangelism/Follow-up: Sunday/Monday: 1:30/7:30pm
Worship Team: Monday/Saturday-9pm;
Cell Groups Tuesday: 7:30pm
Mid-week Service: 7:30pm
Prayer Meeting Wednesday: 7:30pm
Leader's Bible Study Friday: 7:30 pm
Cornerstone School of Ministry Saturday: 7:30pm

Episcopal/Anglican Church on Saipan
St. Paul's Episcopal Church
Worship Service Sunday: Holy Communion 9:00am
Place: Vicarage, Chalan Laulau,
Call 235-0545 for directions

Grace Christian Assembly, Saipan
Worship Service: 9am
GBI Classes: 4-6pm
Prayer Meeting: Monday-Saturday: 6am
Sunday: 7am
Home Cell Bible Study: Wednesday-Friday: 7pm
Youth Service: Friday: 5:30pm

Iglesia Ni Cristo, Saipan
Wednesday: 7:45pm (Tagalog)
Thursday: 5:30am (English); 7:45 pm (English)
Saturday: 5:30am (Tagalog); 7:45pm (Tagalog)
Sunday: 6:45am (English)
Children Worship Service: Sunday, 9am (English)

Immanuel United Methodist Church Koblerville
Sunday Services
9:00 AM
Place of the church-next to Mt. Carmel Cathedral on Chalan Kanoa Dr. • Tel: 322-6158
Pastor JJ Matsumoto

Immanuel Methodist Church (Filipino Congregation)
Sunday: 7:00am-Choir Rehearsal
8:00am-Church Service (Tagalog)
9:15am-Sunday School
Wednesday: 6:30pm, home group
8:00pm-Prayer Meeting
Thursday: 7:30pm-Choir Practice (Church)
Saturday: 8:00pm-Choir Practice (Parsonage)

Jesus is Lord Church, Saipan
English Service: 9-11am, Sunday
Tagalog Service: 6-8pm, Sunday

Korean Presbyterian Church, Saipan
Sunday School: 8:20am
Sunday Adult: 10am
Sunday Adult: 11:30am
Sunday Evening: 7:30pm
Wednesday: 8pm

Life in the Son Christian Fellowship, Saipan
Sunday Worship Service: 10am–12noon
Tuesday: Leadership Institute 7pm-10pm
Wednesday: Corporate prayer 7pm-8pm
Last Friday of the month-prayer: 7pm-11pm
Friday: Youth on Fire: 7pm-9pm
Tel. No. 235-LIFE (5433)

Marianas Baptist Church, Saipan
English Worship Service: 9-10:30am
Evening Worship Service: 6-7pm
Children Sunday School: 9-10:30am
Tagalog Sunday School: 11am-12pm
English Sunday School: 11am-12pm
Korean Worship Service: 11am-12pm
Wednesday Prayer Meeting:
English, 7pm-8pm
Korean: 8:30pm-9:30pm

Missions Connection Ministry
Every Sunday Celebrations:
10am (English), 6pm (Tagalog)
Wednesday Bible Study: 7pm
Youth Impact Friday: 7pm
Saturday Prayer Meeting: 7pm

Northern Marianas Christian Church
Sunday Worship Service 10am Fina Sisu Housing FS#1 (Child care will be provided)
Friday Services @ 7pm Fina Sisu FS#1 for more info pls. contact Ryan 484-2620

Saipan Bible Fellowship Church
Sunday School: 9:30-10am
Divine Worship: 10am-11:30am
Evening Service: 7pm-8:30pm
Wednesday Prayer Meeting: 8pm-9pm

Saipan Christian Church
Sunday: 7:30am-10am
Sunday: 6:30 pm -9pm
Monday: 8 pm -10pm (Prayer Meeting)
Thursday: 8pm-10pm (Cell Groups)

Saipan Church of Christ
Sunday Bible Class: 9am
Sunday Worship: 10am
Sunday Worship English: 6pm
Sunday Worship Tagalog: 7pm
Wednesday Bible Study: 7:30pm

Saipan Community Church
(Sunday Services)
Palau Service: 7:30am-9am
English Service: 10am-11:30am
Chuukese Service: 1pm-2:30pm
Filipino Service: 5:00pm-7:00pm

Seventh-Day Adventist Church, Saipan
(Saturday Church Services)
Sabbath School Program: 9-10am
Lesson Study: 10-10:40am
Divine Service: 11-12pm
Visitation: 3-4pm
Adventist Youth Program: 4:30-5:30pm
Sundown Worship: 6-7pm

First Baptist Church
(Formerly Saipan Baptist Church)
Afetna St., San Antonio

Sunday		
	9am	Sunday school
	10am	Regular worship
	6pm	worship
Wednesday		
	7pm	worship

Everyone is warmly welcome to attend our worship services. Transportation is readily available to anyone who needs a ride to our church. For further information, please call Pastor David M. Mclure at 234-1939/235-7779.

Thy Word Ministries Saipan Faith Center
Phone 234-0209
New Christian Charismatic Church Service located in Chalan Paio, Beach Road in the Sablan building on the 2nd floor above Subway Sandwiches.
Senior Pastors: George & Gail Kamakahi
Asst. Pastors: Eric & Penny Sakaguchi
Service Times
Sunday 10:00am Worship Service
Sunday 7pm Discipleship Classes
Tuesday 10:00am Bible Studies
Tuesday 6:00pm Intercessory Prayer
Tuesday 7:00pm Music Practice
Wednesday 7:00pm Mid-Week Service
Saturday 10:00am Evangelism

Upper Room International Ministries

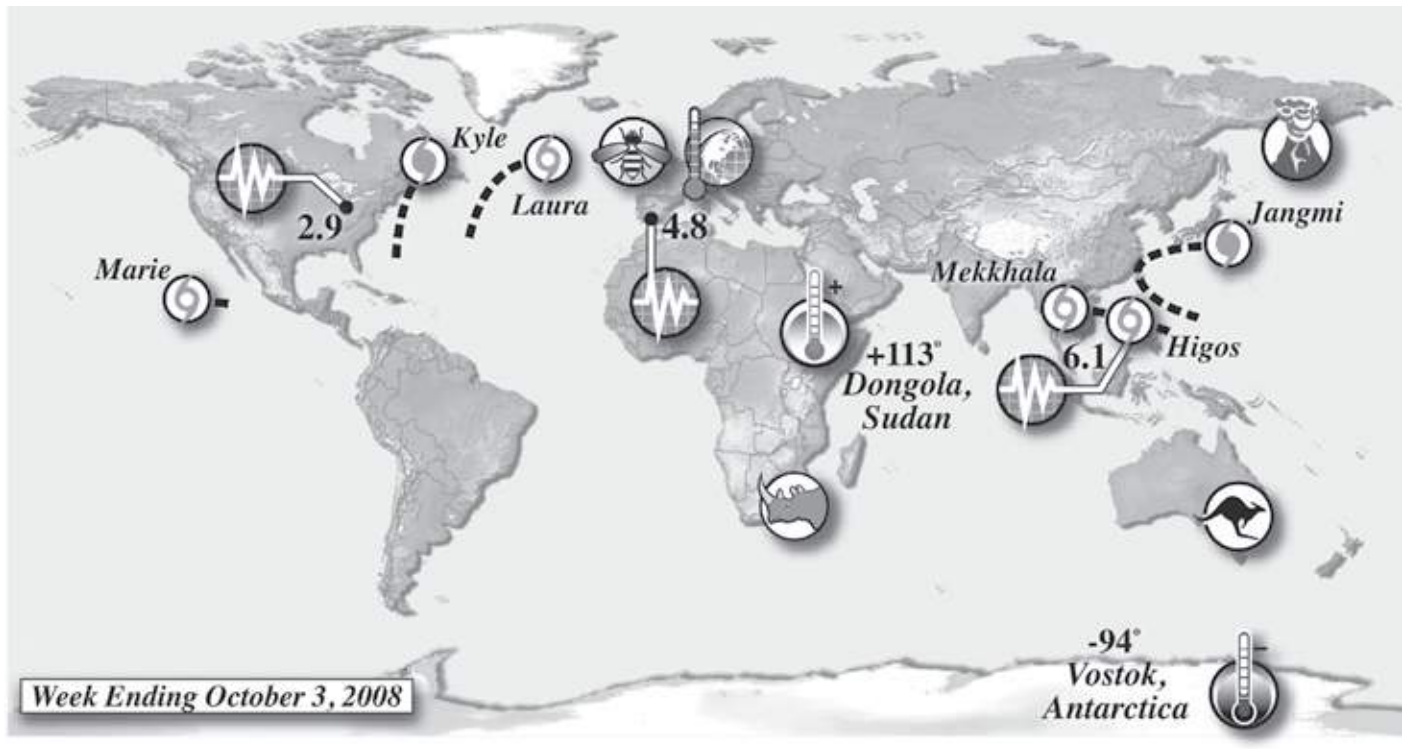
Sunday	5:30am-6:30am	
Morning prayer		
	7am-9am	English service
	7am-9am	Sunday school
	10am-12noon	English service,
Koblerville		
Wednesday	7pm-9pm	Prayer meeting
Saturday	7pm-9pm	Tagalog service

Venue: Jason Presbyterian Church
Gualo Rai, Saipan

Victory Chapel Christian Fellowship Church
Sunday School: 9:30am
Sunday AM Worship:10:30am
Sunday PM Worship:7:00am
Wed Worship: 7:30pm
Prayer 45 min. Prior to Service Times
Morning Prayer: 6-8am M-S

Earthweek: A Diary of the Planet

By STEVE NEWMAN



Climate Deadline 2010

Britain's meteorological agency warned that the world must take drastic action to reduce greenhouse gas pollution within the next two years or face the worst effects of climate change. The Meteorological Office's usually conservative Hadley Center said that only by cutting emissions by 3 percent a year beginning in 2010 can the world prevent global temperatures from rising by more than 3.6 degrees Fahrenheit (2 degrees Celsius) this century. That increase is widely recognized as the point at which the worst impacts of sea level rise, climate change and subsequent wide-scale extinctions would begin. The Hadley Center warning came only two months before world leaders will meet in Poland to discuss a new treaty on cutting global emissions. Many feel the nearly immediate 3 percent cut being recommended for 2010 would be almost impossible to achieve.

Tropical Cyclones

Officials in northern Vietnam say that eight people died and several others were left missing when Tropical Storm Mekkhala roared ashore in Quang Binh province. High winds from the storm knocked out power and blew the tin roofs off houses.

■ Typhoon Jangmi, the most powerful to strike Taiwan so far this year, left two people dead and forced the closure of businesses and financial markets.

■ Tropical Storm Higos drenched the central Philippines.

■ Hurricane Kyle buffeted New England and Atlantic Canada. Subtropical Storm Laura formed over the North Atlantic.

■ Tropical Storm Marie churned the open waters of the eastern Pacific.

Pesticide Ban Proposed

Britain's Soil Association has urged the government to join four other European countries in banning a pesticide linked to honeybee deaths around the world. The Guardian reports that the chemicals, known as neonicotinoids, are approved to kill insects on a range of crops in the U.K. Germany suspended the sale of the pesticides in May following reports from 700 beekeepers in the Rhine Valley that two-thirds of their bees had died following their use. Britain's National Farmers' Union blasted the proposed ban, saying it would not be based on "good science." The Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs attributes the honeybee decline to a variety of factors, and says there are no plans to ban the pesticides. Bee colonies have declined between 30 and 90 percent around the world over the last two years, threatening two-thirds of all major crops that depend upon bees for pollination.

Rhino Killings

The number of rhino deaths from poaching in South Africa has soared in recent months, with 12 white rhinos being killed in the eastern province of KwaZulu-Natal alone so far this year. The Witness daily reports that rangers have found the decomposing carcasses of the animals, apparently shot with high-caliber rifles and their horns cleanly removed with a sharp instrument. Only about two or three killings a year have occurred over the past decade. Rhinoceros horns are highly prized in Asia, especially China, where they are considered to have medicinal and aphrodisiacal properties. Last year, Zimbabwe announced a plan to surgically dehorn the country's rhino population to prevent poaching.

Kamchatka Plume

Far East Russia's Shiveluch volcano spewed a massive column of ash that soared nearly 15,000 feet above the Kamchatka Peninsula. The local office of the Geophysics Service of the Russian Academy of Sciences said that the volcanic debris did not pose a threat to any communities or communications networks. The volcano is one of the most active in the region, and is located far from any population centers.

Earthquakes

Two strong quakes jolted Manila and other parts of the northern Philippines within five minutes.

■ Earth movements were also felt in southern Spain and Ohio.

Eat Roo to Cool Earth

The Australian government's leading climate change adviser says the country should switch to eating kangaroo instead of beef to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Professor Ross Garnaut noted in an official report that while the belching and flatulence of grazing farm animals is a major source of methane, kangaroos emit almost none of that greenhouse gas. "For most of Australia's human history of around 60,000 years, kangaroo was the main source of meat. It could again become important," Garnaut said. He noted that some barriers to this culinary shift include livestock and farm-management issues, consumer resistance and the gradual nature of change in food tastes. As might be expected, the head of the Northern Territory Cattlemen's Association, Luke Bowen, called the proposal "ridiculous."

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OFFBEAT BRIEFS

9 from Roswell, NM, claim $200M Powerball jackpot

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. (AP)—Roswell, N.M., is usually more associated with little green men than with greenbacks. But nine residents brought different attention to the town Friday when they claimed a Powerball jackpot worth more than $200 million. Holly Baldwin bought the tickets at a gas station two hours before the Sept. 27 drawing. Her group decided to take a lump payment of more than $100 million. Fellow winner Ron Miller says they will invest most of the money and set up a charity trust. The winning numbers were 13, 24, 29, 40 and 52, with 29 as the Powerball number. The $206.9 million jackpot is New Mexico's largest lottery sum ever and the 15th-largest jackpot in Powerball history.

Naked lunch promo dropped to placate town board

GREENVILLE, Maine (AP)—There's no such thing as a free lunch anymore for Black Frog Restaurant patrons nervy enough to run down a dock and plunge naked into Moosehead Lake. Owner Leigh Turner decided Thursday to stop giving out a free Skinny Dip sandwich—that's thinly sliced prime rib on a baguette—for a skinny dip after the town board voted to deny his liquor license renewal application. In their decision the night before, selectmen in the popular tourist town noted that they would have had no problem granting the license if the promotion ended for the $10.95 sandwich. Thus, said Turner, dropping the deal was a no-brainer. "Au jus" wins out over "au naturel."

What a show: Cigarette sets off fireworks in car

CENTRAL FALLS, R.I. (AP)—A Rhode Island man faces charges after the cigarette he was smoking inside a car apparently ignited fireworks. Police arrested the 28-year-old Sunday after an officer found a sedan smoking in the middle of the street. Firefighters were called to extinguish the blaze. No one was injured. The man told police he was smoking a cigarette in the car when fireworks near his feet ignited. Witnesses told police they saw a passenger tossing fireworks out shortly before police arrived. The man is charged with the use or possession of fireworks under $500.

Good Housekeeping

E-design offers less costly alternative to hiring a decorator

By TERRI SAPIENZA
(C) 2008, THE WASHINGTON POST

Web-based interior design services are growing in popularity, even though the designer never steps foot in the room.

These services are faster and less expensive than the usual terms of a designer-client relationship, and they are largely conducted online. Clients typically e-mail photos of their rooms, fill out a questionnaire and pay a flat fee. Weeks later, sometimes sooner, they receive a customized design plan that can be implemented with pieces from retail stores and Web sites.

Cost-effective and convenient, Web consulting is just another example of the democratization of interior design, a luxury once afforded only by the wealthy. Fueled by an increasing number of cable TV shows, shelter magazines and design blogs, homeowners and renters of every income level have been inspired to put a personal stamp on their interiors. Web-based services not only encourage design, they make it easier to accomplish and allow clients more-affordable access to designers outside their geographical area.

"People now are design savvy. They want a designer, they want a designed house, but they can't always afford one," says Los Angeles designer Betsy Burnham. "Sometimes all they need is that master plan."

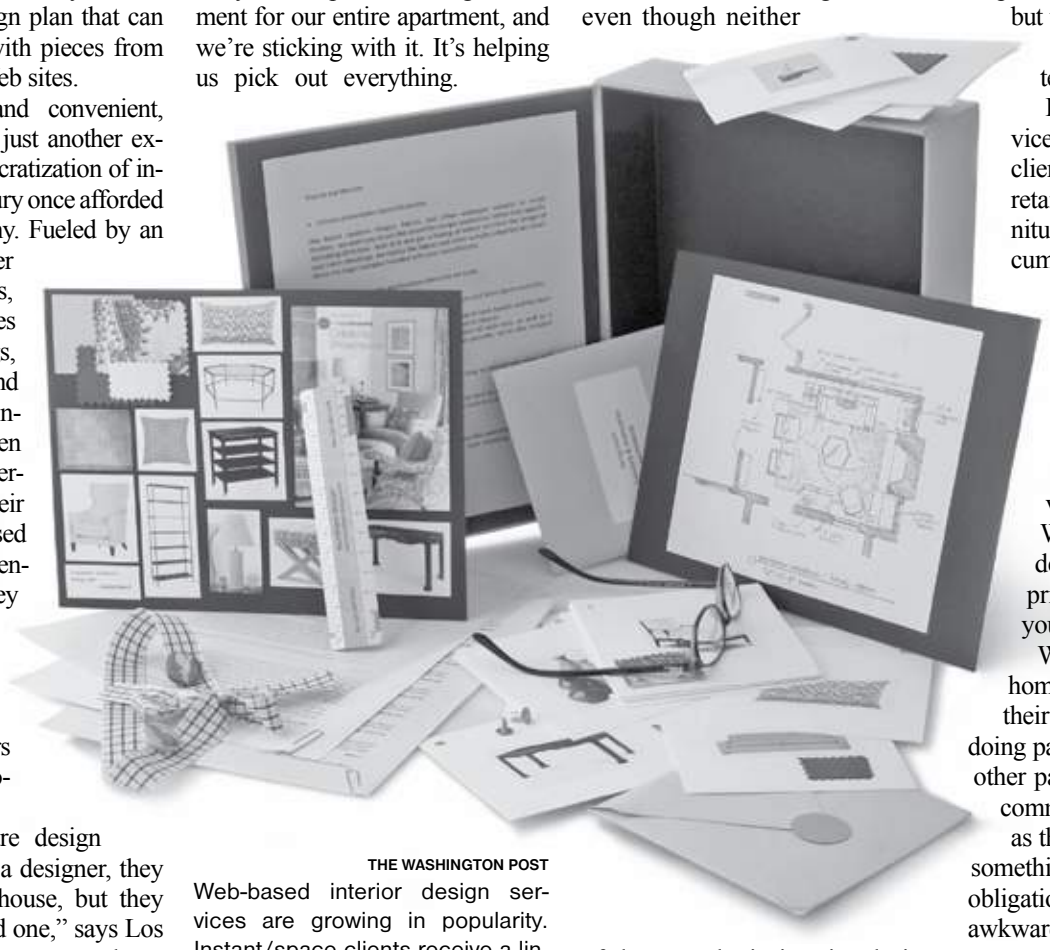
While focusing on larger projects to build her business, Burnham had to turn away clients with smaller projects and budgets. So she created Instant/space, a flat-fee service for clients who want design but not a full-time interior designer. According to her Web site, Instant/space is for those who have a limited budget, want to address only one or two rooms, or want to work in their own time frame based on a master plan.

Four to six weeks after an initial phone call, questionnaire and e-mail exchange (and, of course, payment), Instant/space clients receive a handsome linen-covered box in the mail containing a scale drawing of the room, an inspiration board, a shopping list and swatch books with all furniture, fabric and paint suggestions. The one-time fee ranges from $895 to $1,495 per room.

"It's an arsenal they can take with them when they go out to the stores," Burnham says. "It's a cheat sheet."

Anne-Marie, 33, and Brandon Kavulla, 36, of New York used Burnham's service for five rooms of their Upper East Side apartment. They tried contacting a few Manhattan designers but none would return the calls.

"I had never done anything like this before, but I thought, this is our beautiful apartment; I don't want to screw it up," Anne-Marie Kavulla says. "At this stage in our life and family, we didn't want to spend a good portion of our budget on someone's salary. We would rather (spend it on) the necessary items we needed for our apartment. ... They came up with a design statement for our entire apartment, and we're sticking with it. It's helping us pick out everything.



THE WASHINGTON POST

Web-based interior design services are growing in popularity. Instant/space clients receive a linen-covered box containing a scale drawing of the room, an inspiration board, a shopping list and swatch books with suggestions for paint, fabric and furniture.

We were thrilled. It does give you a little work to do, but it's fun."

Designers who offer Internet consulting acknowledge that seeing a space in person is optimal and that these alternative services are merely meant to provide inspiration and to point people in the right direction. Others dismiss the concept entirely, arguing that the impersonal nature sabotages good design from the get-go.

"Good, strong design is based on a strong client-designer relationship," says D.C. designer Patrick Baglino. "Some of the most important things are the details, and they come from being in the space, ... adding accessories, bringing in the personality of the client. It's important that a designer actually see the space." Without seeing a room in person, he adds, it's impossible to accurately account for such factors as scale, color and lighting.

Baglino understands the appeal of such services: "In this economy, it's certainly very attractive." But he's also clear about the drawbacks.

"There's value in hiring an interior designer. You're paying for education, expertise and knowledge of things like spatial relationships, balance, scale and rhythm. Those are aspects integral to interior design that you can't cover by looking at a picture and filling in the blanks. It's not just about making pretty."

But for some, pretty is enough.

Bloggers John and Sherry Petersik of Richmond, Va., offer a Web-based decorating service, even though neither of them works in interior design or has any formal design training. Since they started offering their service last year, they've created virtual makeovers for more than 50 clients.

"You'd be surprised how many people don't care about our experience," says Sherry Petersik. "They just like our aesthetic. The proof is in the pudding. They've seen it, and that's what they want."

What the Petersiks' clients also want are affordable furnishings. The usual suspects on the bloggers' resource list include budget-friendly retailers JC Penney, Wal-Mart and Target.

But these services are not for everyone, cautions Linda Merrill, a designer and blogger in Boston who offers a wide range of Web-based consulting. She says those who use these services would rather spend money on furnishings than on a designer's time. "If you have a modest budget, you don't necessarily want to take 25 percent of that and pay a decorator."

According to several designers, virtual clients are typically 30-something women or young couples who are in their first home or have just remodeled or had a child. They are design-savvy people who want to make sure they do it right and avoid costly mistakes. They want help that takes them beyond what they can find flipping through the Pottery Barn catalogue.

"Most are $1,500 to $2,000 sofa people," says Southern California designer and blogger Megan Arquette, who started her Room-to-Go service 2 1/2 years ago. "They're done with the baby thing, so now they want their house to be cute and pulled-together. They would love to do it on their own, but they need help. They want a grown-up house, but they don't necessarily have the resources to hire an interior designer."

By eliminating the full services of an interior designer, clients avoid the costs of hefty retainers, hourly fees and furniture markups, which can accumulate quickly.

Web-based design also feeds the ever-growing need to have it now. "Everything is electronic," L.A.-based designer and blogger Vanessa De Vargas says about her service, E-Decorating. Her Web-based clients receive a design plan via e-mail with prices and links. "You get it, you click on it, you buy it."

With a design plan in hand, homeowners can work within their own timeline and budget, doing part of the plan now and another part in two years. They can commit to as much or as little as they wish. If they don't like something in the plan, there's no obligation to go forward or any awkwardness about having to say no. "It's more private in the sense that no one is in your house, and you don't feel you're being judged," De Vargas says.

But the comfort of privacy may ultimately undermine the design. "You take the personal interaction out of the equation, and there's a big part of the design that's missing," Baglino says.

He suggests that those on a budget find a local design school grad who will have the skills, just not the experience.

"There's no substitute for one-on-one human contact," he says. "You need that to create an outstanding design."

Even Kavulla, who had success with Web-based design in her New York apartment, agrees.

"Certainly there are things you can't account for unless you're in the space, but in terms of cost, we got what we paid for," she said. "It's not a perfect service, so you're not going to get a perfect product, but it's 10,000 times better than doing it on my own and making expensive mistakes."

RESOURCES

By TERRI SAPIENZA
(C) 2008, THE WASHINGTON POST

INSTANT/SPACE
Betsy Burnham, Burnham Design, Los Angeles
- www.instantspacedesign.com
- Years of experience: 12
- Cost: $895 to $1,495 per room
- What you get: A concept board; detailed schematic of the furniture plan drawn to scale; samples of fabrics, wallpaper/paint and flooring; shopping list of resources; step-by-step explanation of how to complete the plan. All items are packaged in a presentation box and mailed to the client.
- Turnaround time: Four to six weeks

ROOM-TO-GO
Megan Arquette, Bungalow Home Staging & Design, Manhattan Beach, Calif.
- www.beachbungalow8.blogspot.com
- Years of experience: 13
- Cost: $800 to $1,100 per room
- What you get: An inspiration board; hand-drawn floor plan; samples of wallpaper, fabric and paint colors; a list and photos of suggested furnishings with dimensions and prices; a resource list for all items and labor, if necessary. All items are packaged in a presentation box and mailed to the client.
- Turnaround time: Four to six weeks

VIRTUAL DECORATING
Linda Merrill, Chameleon Interiors, Duxbury, Mass.
- www.chameleon-interiors.com
- Years of experience: seven
- Cost: $50 to $1,000
- What you get: Merrill offers a range of services, including telephone consultations (starting at $50), home staging plans ($150 per room) and floor plans ($375 per room). The floor plan service provides clients with rendered drawings, recommendations for furniture sizes, and, in most cases, four to six layout options per room. Everything is generally delivered via e-mail; regular mail service available.
- Turnaround time: Varies according to selected service.

E-DECORATING
Vanessa De Vargas, Turquoise, Los Angeles
- www.turquoise-la.com
- Years of experience: four
- Cost: $450 to $500 per room
- What you get: A design board, a detailed description of where to place furnishings and accessories, and list of links to all resources needed to complete the project. Suggestions can include paint, wallpaper, fabric, rugs, lighting, furniture, art and window treatment options. Everything is delivered via e-mail.
- Turnaround time: 2 1/2 weeks

DECORATING ADVICE
John and Sherry Petersik, This Young House blog, Richmond, Va.
- www.thisyounghouse.com
- Years of experience: none
- Cost: $120
- What you get: A custom "mood board," a new furniture layout, suggestions for paint, lighting, furniture and accessories, and a list of all resources. (All suggestions are available for immediate purchase online.) Mood boards are posted on the blog, and all additional information is sent via e-mail.
- Turnaround time: One week

THE WASHINGTON POST

If you're pondering buying a first home, you should consider the state of your finances, how well you understand the process and even the stability of your romantic life.

When to buy that first house

By MARY ELLEN SLAYTER

(C) 2008, THE WASHINGTON POST

WASHINGTON—The decision about whether to buy a first home is complex. You need to consider the state of your finances, how well you understand the process and even the stability of your romantic life.

Buying a home takes money, obviously. Besides the down payment, buyers can expect to pay thousands of dollars in closing costs. There are also significant costs associated with selling, so financial planners generally advise people to avoid buying if they don't plan to stay for a while.

Karen P. Schaeffer, a financial planner in Rockville, Md., said she advises clients not to buy unless they see themselves in the house for at least five years. "If your job isn't settled, please don't buy," she said. "I don't want you to lose a job opportunity" over a house.

Although you can't predict the future, she said, people generally come to a point in their lives when they want to settle somewhere for a while. "It may be for the schools, for the community, or just because they don't want to move again."

Look at the likely scenarios for your life in the next few years, she said, and evaluate the odds that the place will still work for you under those circumstances.

And it shouldn't take an exotic mortgage to pay for your home, she said. "I'm a really huge fan of fairly conventional financing," especially after seeing how so many people got into trouble with other types of loans in the past few years. A buyer considering an alternative loan, such as one with an interest-only payment or an adjustable rate, should "try out the worst-case scenario" and see if the budget can handle it, she said.

Other expenses

As would be-buyers prepare a budget, they shouldn't neglect the other expenses often associated with moving, such as new window treatments and furniture, Schaeffer said. "Making it livable and making it yours is all part of why you want to buy."

Bruce K. Sneed, a financial planner in Woodbridge, Va., pointed out that extra cash is especially important if you are buying a place significantly bigger than where you live now. "If you buy this giant house, you're going to have to furnish it—or you're going to be walking around in a bunch of empty rooms."

Andi Fleming, a real estate agent with Long & Foster in D.C., said she advises first-time home buyers who are dreaming of big renovations to be especially cautious. "The cost can be extraordinary."

But even regular maintenance can add up. And, Fleming warned, "if you don't pay for it annually, you will pay for it when you sell the house."

Schaeffer suggests that prospective home buyers draw up an estimate of what their budget will be after they buy and then follow it for six to 12 months. "It's an easy way to prove to them that they are not quite ready—or get them motivated."

Down payment

Another key factor: the ability to save. "People have to be serious enough about it to collect a down payment first," Schaeffer said.

There are still loan programs that will allow people to buy with less cash upfront, but Sneed encourages his clients to rent until they save a 20 percent down payment.

That discipline to save will pay off when renters become homeowners, both planners said.

"When you're a homeowner, not only do you have to make those very predictable monthly expenses, but you have to be prepared to protect that investment," Schaeffer said. "So let's have a little bit of wiggle room."

How much would-be buyers need to save depends in part on how reliable their income is. For example, she pointed out, "a federal government job is usually pretty darn stable," but someone who is self-employed may need a bigger cash cushion.

Still, even with a stable job, she said, there are no guarantees in life. One time when you go to the dentist, "it's going to be something big," she said.

She said people should ask themselves how long they can go without a paycheck should they lose their job or get seriously ill. "How many months before I am groveling at Aunt Sophie's feet? You ought to be able to go three to six months," she said.

Other goals

But would-be buyers shouldn't limit their analysis to the cost of owning the home, the planners said. They should also make sure ownership won't prevent them from meeting other financial goals, such as buying a car or saving for college and retirement.

"Anybody who is mid-career, we've got too much house if we can't put a lot of money in a 401(k) plan," Schaeffer said.

While they're saving their money, would-be buyers can research the loan application and home buying processes. There are countless resources to explain how they work, including books, Web sites, and free and low-cost seminars.

And of course, people can talk to friends and family.

At minimum, prospective buyers need to understand the elements of a responsible mortgage, said Marietta Rodriguez, national director of homeownership programs for NeighborWorks America, a nonprofit housing organization. "Financial companies have gotten very good at marketing a monthly payment." But that one number doesn't reflect the true cost of a mortgage loan.

Rodriguez recommends that aspiring buyers reach out to a counseling agency approved by the Department of Housing and Urban Development, whether for a one-on-one session or for a class. (A list of HUD-approved agencies can be found at www.hud.gov/offices/hsg/sfh/hcc/hcs.cfm.) These programs can help buyers better understand mortgage terms, budgeting and the roles of all the players involved in a typical real estate transaction. She suggests signing up for such a class before contacting a real estate agent. "Don't shop for houses until you know what you can afford."

Relationship factor

Buying a house on your own is complicated enough, but the process grows more complex when another person is involved. Couples wondering whether they are ready to buy need to take a hard look at the relationship itself, say financial planners, marriage counselors and even divorce lawyers.

"If you're going to do something as serious as buying a house together, you've got to be on the same page," Schaeffer said. "The consequences of owning a home and having a relationship fall apart are very high."

Because of that, it's worth paying attention to the emotional health of your relationship, said Scott Wolfe, a family therapist in Columbia, Md., who primarily works with couples. "There's more to buying a house than the financial aspects," he said. "When you are making that kind of major investment, you really are betting on that relationship. It really is saying, 'I believe in us.'"

A *purchase that fits both your lives*

By MARY ELLEN SLAYTER

(C) 2008, THE WASHINGTON POST

The decision to own your own home is one of the most important that you will make as a couple, said family therapist Scott Wolfe, a family therapist in Columbia, Md.

"Knowing when it is right to make this move requires more than knowledge of the housing market. Above all, it requires both partners to be emotionally ready and in agreement with their life dreams and life goals," he said. His suggestions:

■ Clarify your life dreams. What do you want your life to be in five, 10, 20, or 30 years from now? What are the things you each want, such as your own home, having a substantial college education fund, having a substantial retirement fund? Prioritize these concerns.

■ Share your dreams and goals with your partner. Look for similarities and discuss your perspectives. Work together as a team, and be open to compromise and to accepting influence from each other.

■ Come up with a long-range financial and life plan that you can both agree on. Then move to implement this plan.

KITCHEN MAGIC

Corned Beef Hash and Eggs

1 tablespoon margarine or butter
1 large red pepper, chopped
1 large onion, chopped
4 cups (about half 32-ounce package) frozen hash brown potatoes (Southern style)
8 ounces deli corned beef in 1 piece, cut into 1/2-inch chunks (about 2 cups)
4 large eggs
1/8 teaspoon salt
1/8 teaspoon ground black pepper

1. In nonstick 12-inch skillet, melt margarine over medium-high heat. Add red pepper and onion and cook 10 minutes or until vegetables are tender, stirring often. Stir in frozen hash browns and corned beef; cook 10 minutes or until hash browns are lightly browned. Spread hash evenly in skillet. Reduce heat to medium-low.

2. One at a time, break eggs into cup and slip into skillet on top of hash. Sprinkle eggs with salt and black pepper. Cover skillet and cook 5 to 8 minutes or until eggs are set or cooked to desired doneness.

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Silent leak can damage foundation

By SAMANTHA MAZZOTTA

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Q: I have a finished basement in my house that has stayed dry through the years. However, three years ago our town was flooded in heavy rains and so was the basement. It was drained and repaired quickly. Last week, though, I noticed a big "blister" in the paint on one corner of the basement wall. I poked it and water drained out. Do you think the flood damage wasn't totally repaired?—Jaime C., Lowell, Mass.

A: If it's the first water you've seen in three years, then the repair work is not necessarily the culprit. I do think there is a slow leak near and maybe above where you found that blister.

Head outside and check the foundation on that side of the basement, nearest the blister. Are there any cracks at the base of the wall or in the foundation? Does water runoff occur in that area? Is there any vegetation growing right up against the foundation?

Water runoff striking the foundation directly will eventually seep through. If there are cracks in the area, it will happen even faster. Vegetation growing right up against the wall can develop deep roots down which water will trickle. Those roots also can slowly cause damage to the foundation, over several years, just as constant water runoff can.

Direct runoff away from the foundation by extending your gutter downspout. Digging a downward-grade trench and filling with gravel will further protect the foundation.

Remove plants that butt up against the wall, and as much root as possible; refill the area with the same material as the rest of the ground surrounding the house (dirt, gravel or concrete). Repair cracks in the wall or foundation, and check periodically in case they redevelop.

HOME TIP: Plants and shrubs should be placed at least a foot away from your home's foundation to prevent damage from roots and water seepage.

Send questions or home-repair tips to homeguru2000@hotmail.com, or write This Is a Hammer, c/o King Features Weekly Service, P.O. Box 536475, Orlando, FL 32853-6475.

The Good Life

A nun's return to the arts

By FRANK RIZZO
(C) 2008, THE HARTFORD COURANT

Past old stone walls, lush greenery and hidden driveways to handsome homes, the winding country road in northwestern Connecticut leads to a simple wooden sign that says Abbey of Regina Laudis.

It's the meditative rural setting where Mother Dolores, formerly actress Dolores Hart, has called home since she gave up a Hollywood career during which she made 10 films in five years, playing opposite Montgomery Clift, George Hamilton, Robert Wagner and Stephen Boyd. She made her movie debut with Elvis Presley in 1957 in "Loving You."

It's been 45 years since she left Hollywood for the cloistered order, but Mother Dolores is allowing the spotlight to fall again. But this time she is shining it on the abbey's needs: improving its open-air theater and expanding its arts program for the community in Bethlehem.

Every summer, the 38 nuns at the 61-year-old abbey on 400 rural acres work with the community to stage a musical. (This year it was "West Side Story." Previous shows included "Fiddler on the Roof," "The Music Man" and "My Fair Lady.")

It's not so odd a connection for Benedictine nuns, whose practical work ethic runs parallel with their contemplative life. The sisters are known for more than prayer. They have recorded Gregorian chants (four CDs), created iron sculptures (by Mother Paxedes Baxter) and made cheese-making into an art. (Mother Noella Marcellino, "the cheese nun," was the subject of a PBS documentary.)

The abbey's newest project is to expand its connection to the community through the arts, and Mother Dolores, the abbey's prioress (second in command), is using her fame to do just that.

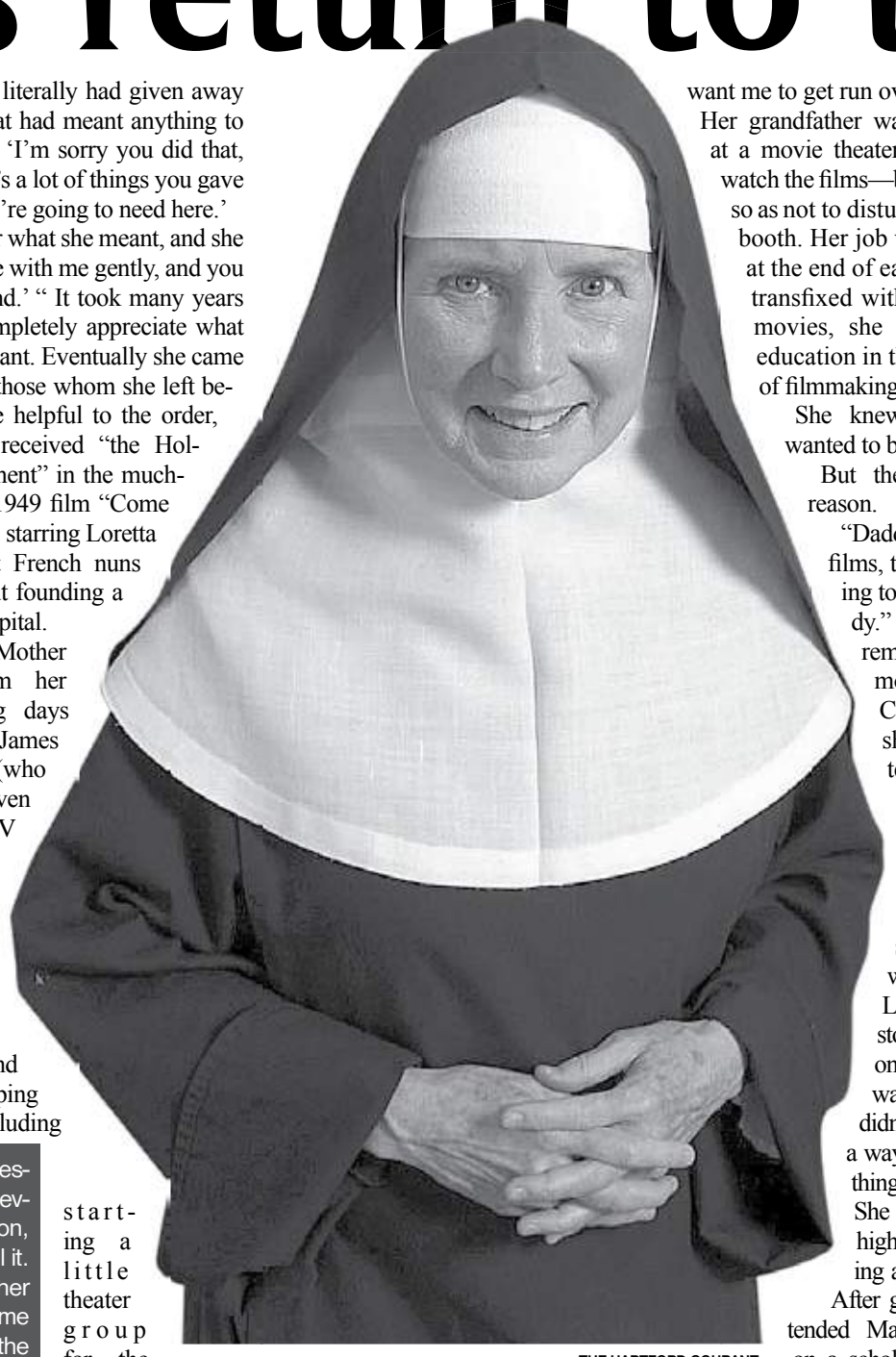
On a warm late-summer day, she welcomes her guests with a delicate graciousness, dressed in traditional full-length black habit and veil. At 69, her bright blue eyes and striking cheekbones hint at the sparkle she showed on screen as a young beauty in Hollywood when she was compared to Grace Kelly. But she also radiated an innate intelligence that, in watching her films today, is reminiscent of a young Katharine Hepburn.

When Hart arrived as a novice, she told Lady Abbess Benedict Duss, who founded the abbey, "I will never have to worry again about being an actress because it was all over and behind me. Lady Abbess said, 'I'm sorry, but you're completely wrong. Now you have to take up a role and really work at it.'

"I was so mad when she said that because I really emptied my pockets, so to speak, and literally had given away everything that had meant anything to me. She said, 'I'm sorry you did that, because there's a lot of things you gave away that you're going to need here.'

"I asked her what she meant, and she said, 'You live with me gently, and you will understand.' " It took many years for her to completely appreciate what the abbess meant. Eventually she came to know that those whom she left behind could be helpful to the order, which itself received "the Hollywood treatment" in the much-fictionalized 1949 film "Come to the Stable," starring Loretta Young, about French nuns in Connecticut founding a children's hospital.

Friends of Mother Dolores from her movie-making days included James Douglas (who played Steven Cord in the TV series "Peyton Place") and his wife, Dawn. In the '80s, they relocated East, often visited her and wound up helping the abbey, including starting a little theater group for the community and putting on shows every summer at the abbey's annual fair.



THE HARTFORD COURANT
Mother Dolores left a Hollywood career 45 years ago to become a nun at the Abbey of Regina Laudis in Bethlehem, Conn., where she is expanding the abbey's arts program for the local community.

When asked if she felt Elvis Presley, whom she worked with in several films, was a spiritual person, Mother Dolores said, "I didn't feel it. I knew it. When we spoke together between scenes, he talked to me about the Bible. He'd pick up the Gideon Bible from his hotel room and go to a particular text and say, 'Well, what do you think of this?'

"He actually talked about it. I thought that was touching because there was no actor I ever worked with who I had that type of elevated communication. Mostly they would sit and jabber about nonsense. I was 19, and he was 22, and at that age, that was done out of something that is a part of you." ***(The Hartford Courant)***

The arts are a good fit for the abbey, said Mother Dolores, "because St. Benedict is very practical and a man who always wants to help people do the basic things in life. The arts are a basic need because it opens what is holy in people, and it teaches them how to live together." She saw the transformative power of theater on young people who worked on this summer's "West Side Story." "When they came to Sunday Mass, they were far more willing and open to be present to what the Eucharist was about," she said.

Mother Dolores envisions a year-round arts school and a better-equipped stage. (The late Paul Newman helped with funding for a lighting grid, she said.)

When asked if these arts efforts reconnect her to her past secular life, she said, "Absolutely. But that's part of what contemplative life does. It puts you in the constant mode of reconnecting and refocusing."

Mother Dolores smiles when it is suggested that her life story would make a good movie or book.

A friend of hers, she said, has been helping her document details of her life, especially from her early days, "because there will come a day when I can't remember." She was born Dolores Hicks in 1938, the only child of Bert and Harriett Hicks. "My parents were only 16 and 17 when I was born," she said, "and they died very young. I kind of lived fast and died young with them." Her father was an extra and bit player in Hollywood. Their parents divorced when she was 3. As a child, she lived with her grandparents in Chicago.

Her family was not particularly religious, she said, although she had a great aunt who was a nun, Sister Dolores Marie from St. Louis, who, when she visited, would talk to young Dolores about the lives of the saints.

"She had me pegged when I was 4 years old." She remembers telling her grandmother once "that if I had my life to live over again, I would live it so differently—and that was when I was 4. My grandmother said, 'Have you been talking to Sister Dolores?' " Her grandparents sent Dolores to a nearby parochial school, not for its religious education but because it was closest to home and "my grandparents didn't want me to get run over by streetcars."

Her grandfather was a projectionist at a movie theater, and she would watch the films—but without sound so as not to disturb his naps in the booth. Her job was to wake him at the end of each reel. In being transfixed with these wordless movies, she gave herself an education in the Hollywood art of filmmaking.

She knew then that she wanted to be in the movies.

But there was another reason.

"Daddy was in the films, too, and I was going to go and find Daddy." When her mother remarried, Dolores moved to Southern California, where she grew up a teenager in Hollywood.

"I knew all sides of (the movie-making business)," she said. "My uncle was singer Mario Lanza, so I understood very early on what the picture was in Hollywood. I didn't believe in it as a way of getting everything in a simple way."

She acted in plays in high school (including a role as St. Joan).

After graduating, she attended Marymount College on a scholarship for drama. In her freshman year, a friend sent photos of her to all the film studios. In the middle of a class, she received a call from Paramount. Producer Hal Wallis, who was preparing for Presley's first film, signed her to a contract.

Her first film was 1957's "Loving You," which starred Presley. She played a sweet and innocent girl. However, it wasn't 1961's "Francis of Assisi" but "Lisa," a low-budget dramatic film made the following year, that set Hart on the road to Bethlehem.

In "Lisa," based on a Jan de Hartog novel, she played a Dutch-Jewish Holocaust survivor in post World War II Europe desperate to make her way to her spiritual home in Palestine.

"That was it," she said. "That film was the one that made me really think about the possibility of being a nun. I've never realty spoken about it until now."

She made one more picture after "Lisa"—"Come Fly With Me" with Hugh O'Brien—but by that time, her mind was increasingly on the little abbey she had discovered five years earlier.

In 1958, she made her debut on Broadway in "The Pleasure of His Company," which starred Cyril Ritchard, Cornelia Otis Skinner and George Peppard and earned her a Tony Award nomination as best featured actress. It was then that a friend suggested the Catholic actress might enjoy meeting some nuns at an abbey in Connecticut. Mother Dolores says she felt that she belonged there as soon as she arrived that first time.

On a promotional stop in New York for "Come Fly With Me," she took a limousine up to Bethlehem to discuss the possibility of joining the order.

Her final one-way trip to the abbey in 1963 was not in a limo—as was widely reported in the media at the time—but in a regular car. She was 24. She took her final vows in 1970.

Mother Dolores looks fragile and moves carefully about the grounds, but when she shows off the theater, its backstage and the area where she envisions the arts center's expansion, she has renewed energy and spirit.

For a photograph to promote her arts cause, she sits in a canvas Hollywood-style chair with "Mother Dolores" inscribed on it.

In the early '80s, Oscar-winning actress Patricia Neal ("Hud") found refuge in Mother Dolores' abbey during a particularly difficult part of her life. In appreciation, Neal performed a recital of poems on a hillside at the abbey's ground.

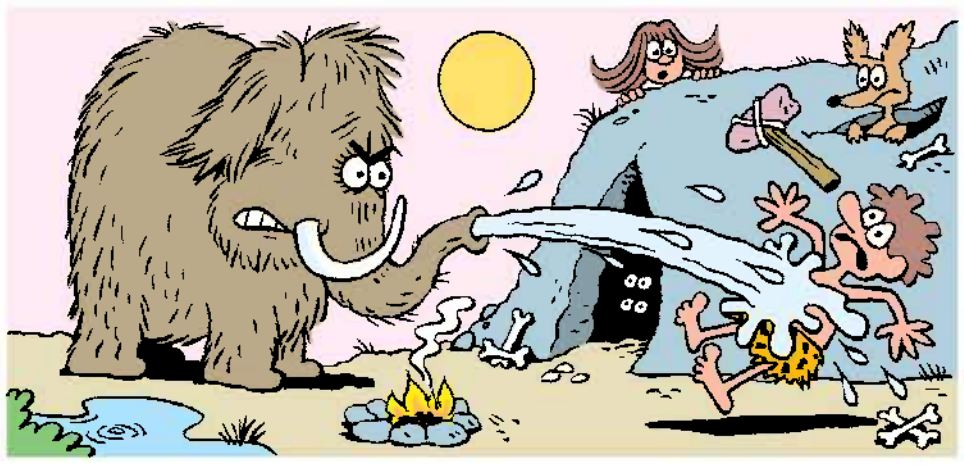
"But then it started to pour, and we all made a dash for the little chapel, and we finished the recital there. Afterward she said, 'Mother Dolores, we can't do that again. We're going to have to build you a theater.' "

In 1986, The Gary-The Olivia Performing Arts Center opened. It's a 200-seat, bare-bones wooden theater named after Neal's daughter, who had died, and the late Hollywood legend Gary Cooper, the father of Mother Dolores' best friend, Maria Cooper. ***(The Hartford Courant)***

THE HARTFORD COURANT
The Gary-The Olivia Performing Arts Center is located on the grounds of the Abbey of Regina Laudis in Bethlehem, Conn.

"The way the Lord worked with me throughout the whole experience," she said of her life, "was a constant reminder that my two lives were always going to be interdependent."

Bob Weber Jr.'s Slylock Fox and Comics for Kids



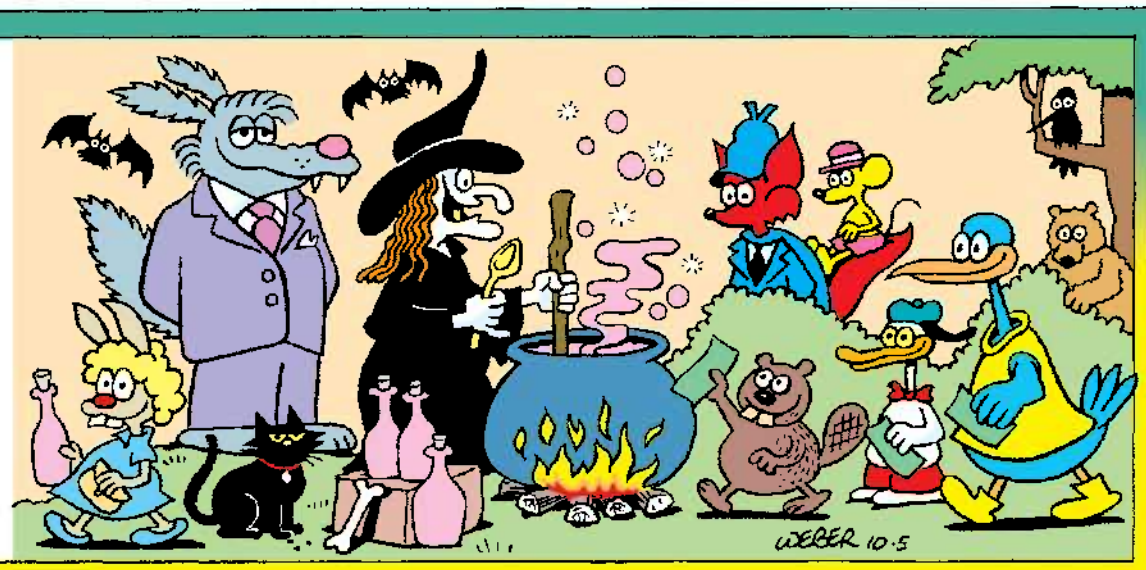
True or False

1) The earliest fossil remains of the mammoth have been found in Alaska.
2) The mammoth became extinct about 10,000 years ago.
3) Mammoths were shorter than modern-day elephants.
4) Mammoths ate fish and crabs.

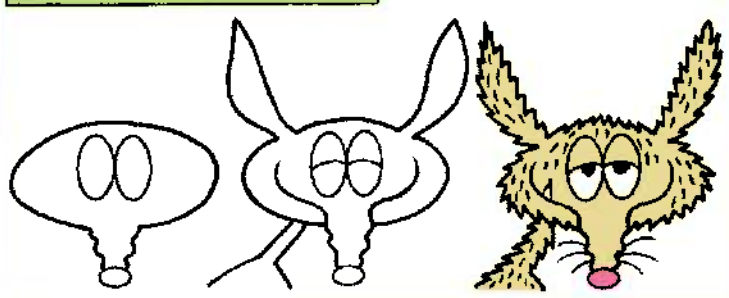
Answer -- 1) False. The earliest remains have been found in Africa. 2) True. 3) False. Mammoths were up to several feet taller than elephants. 4) False. Mammoths were plant eaters.

Wanda Witch claims she has brewed a magic fat-melting potion. She says the wolf drank some and lost 100 pounds in the last five minutes. Slylock Fox insists the only thing customers will lose is their money. What evidence supports Slylock's conclusion?

Solution -- Slylock observed that the wolf's suit fits perfectly. Had he really lost 100 pounds, his clothes would be baggy.

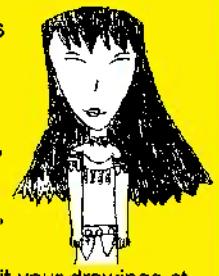


HOW TO DRAW a coyote



YOUR DRAWING

Today's terrific artist is Kaelyn Swank, age 9, of Everett, WA

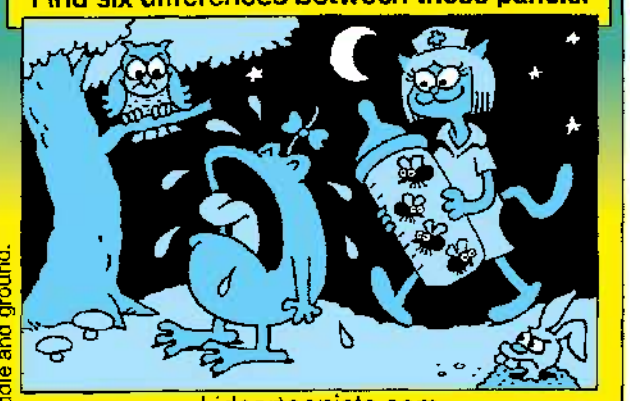


Submit your drawings at **www.kidcartoonists.com**

The scrambled words are reptile species. How many can you unscramble?
1) LUETRT
2) EKANS
3) ALRIDZ
4) OIRECDLOC

Answer -- 1) Turtle 2) Snake 3) Lizard 4) Crocodile

Find six differences between these panels.



www.kidcartoonists.com

Answer -- Tear, moon, mushroom, fly, puddle and ground.

New! The fourth **Find the six differences** collection is here. Send $4 (check/money order in U.S. funds made payable to King Features) with your name and address to **Six Differences No. 4**, P.O. Box 536475, Orlando, FL 32853-6475

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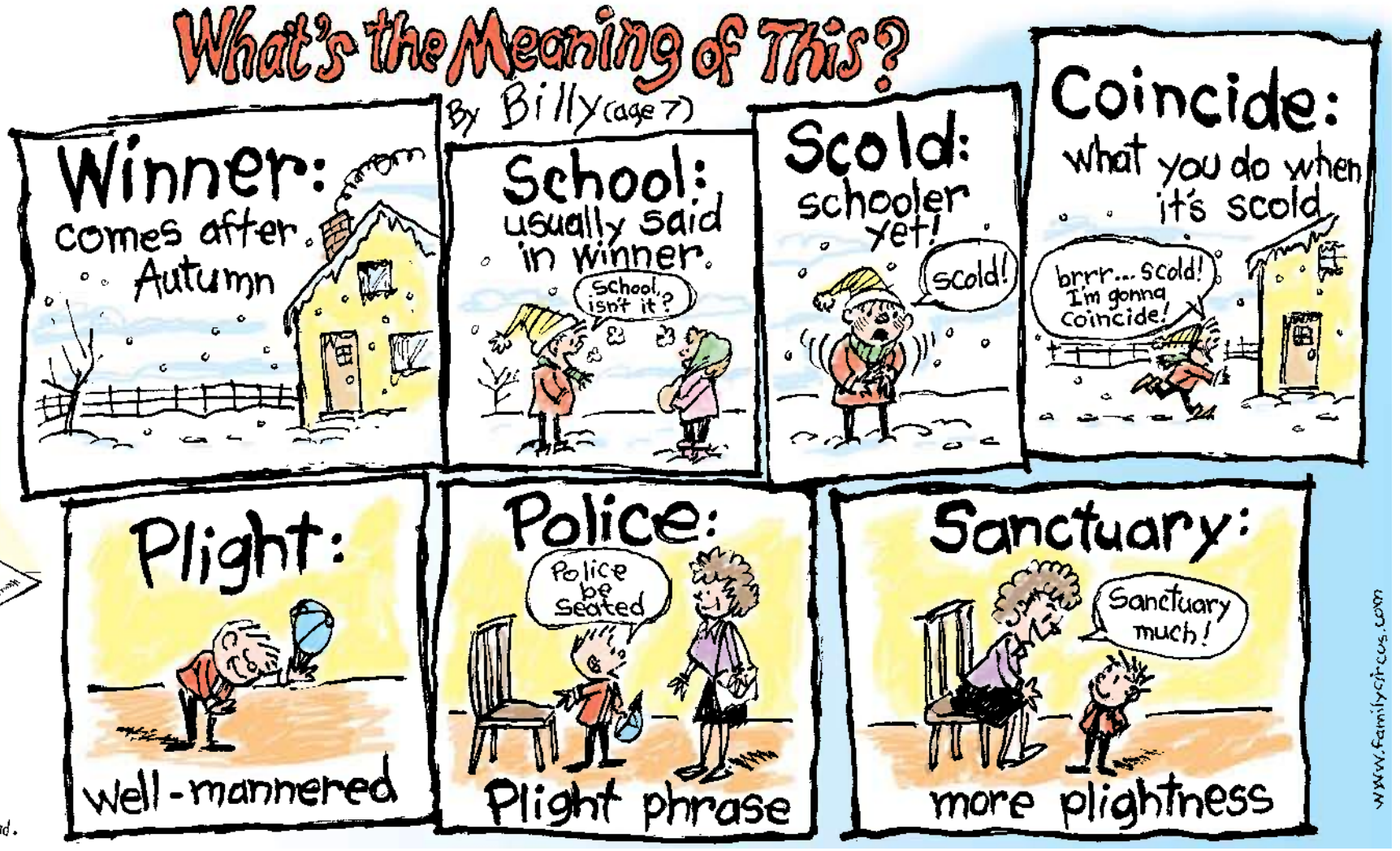
THE FAMILY CIRCUS®

By Bil Keane

What's the Meaning of This?

By Billy (age 7)

While Daddy celebrates his birthday, Billy fills in with this page of definitions.



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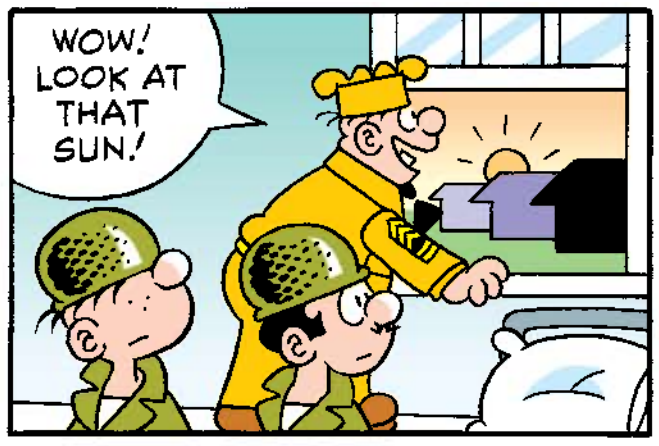

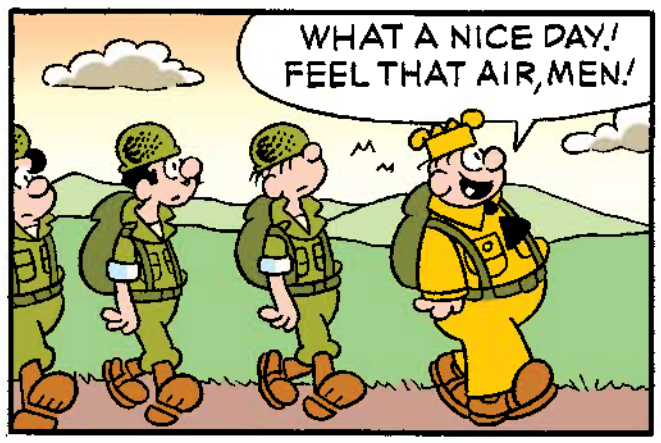

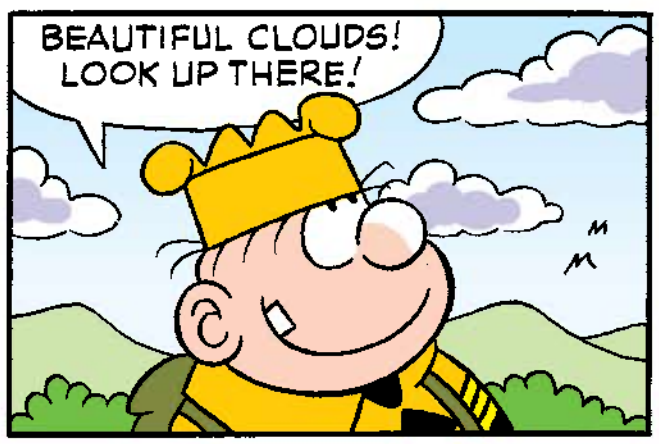

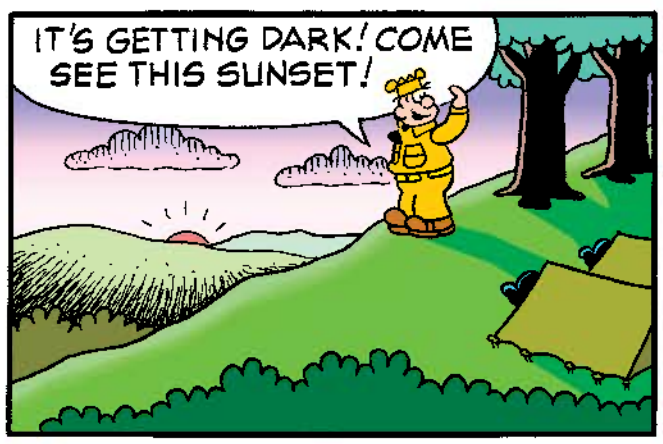

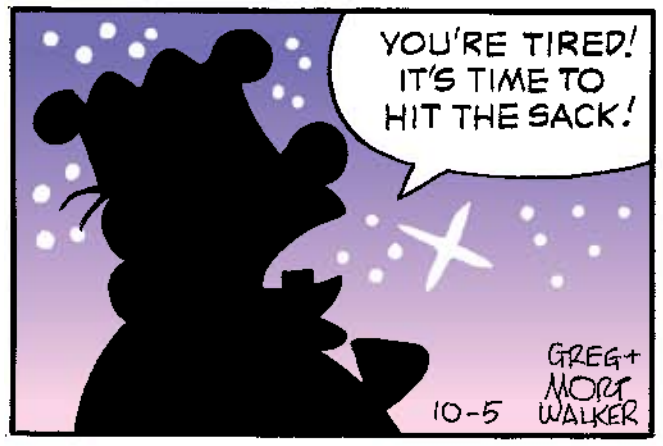

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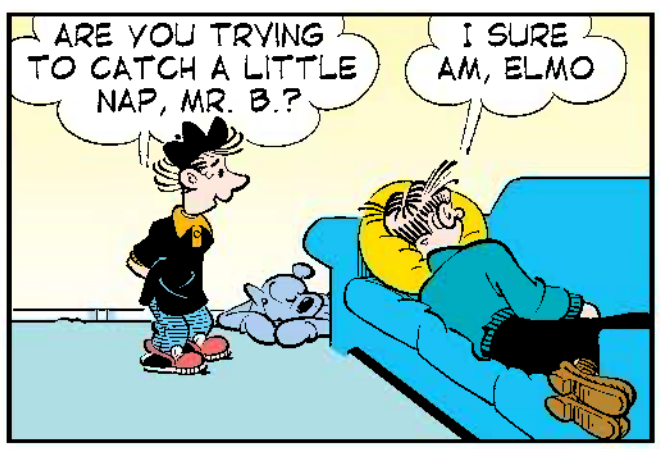
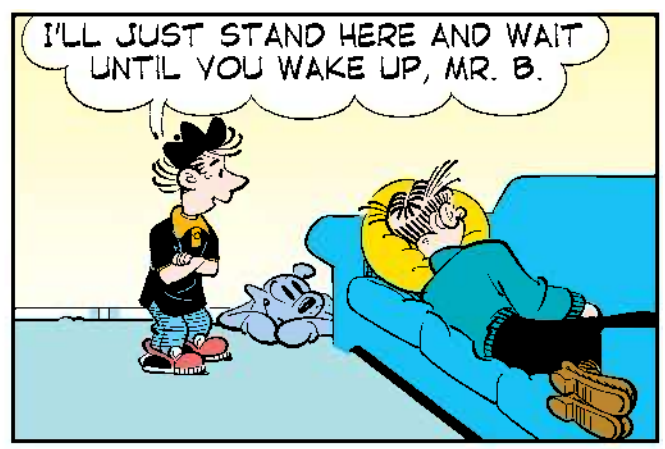
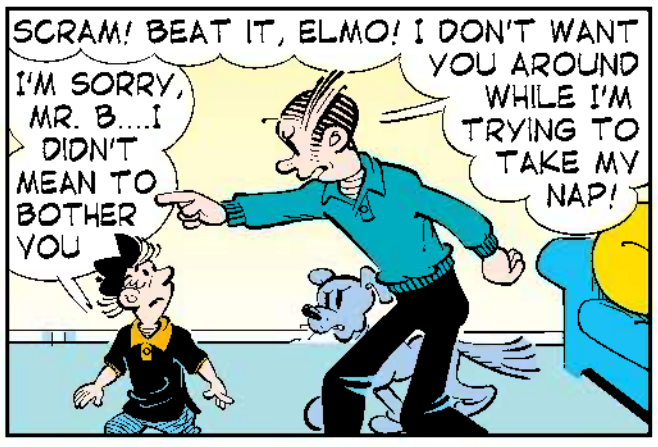
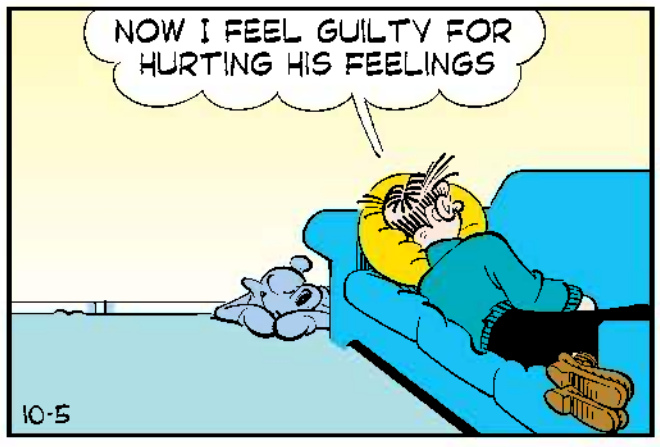
BLONDIE

BY DEAN YOUNG & JOHN MARSHALL









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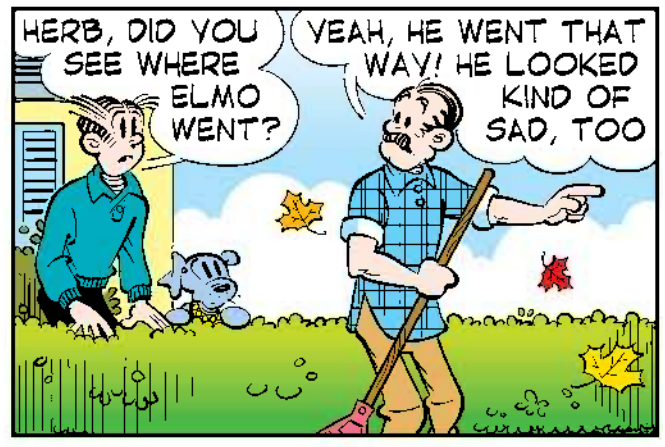

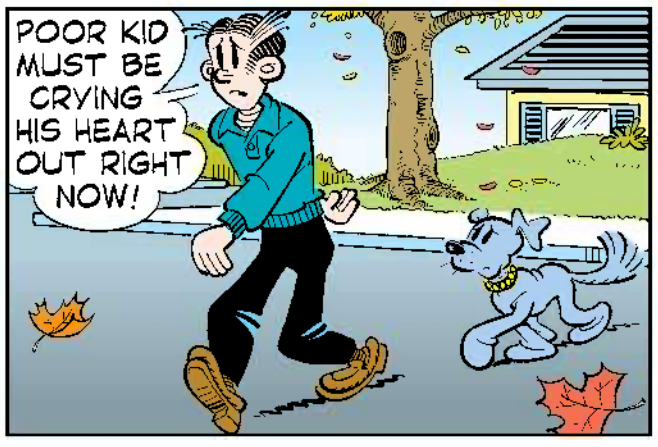

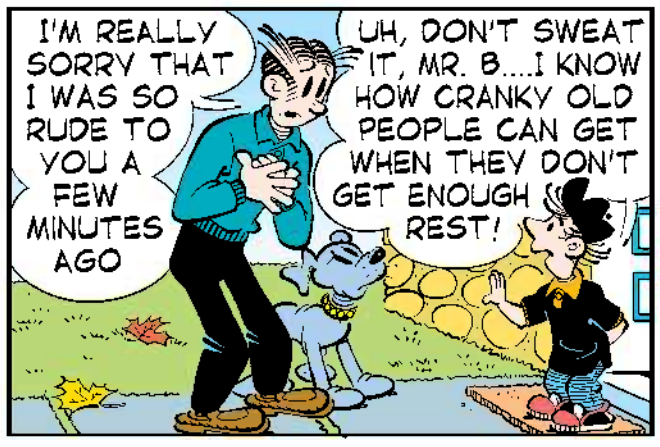
I'M REALLY SORRY THAT I WAS SO RUDE TO YOU A FEW MINUTES AGO
UH, DON'T SWEAT IT, MR. B....I KNOW HOW CRANKY OLD PEOPLE CAN GET WHEN THEY DON'T GET ENOUGH REST!

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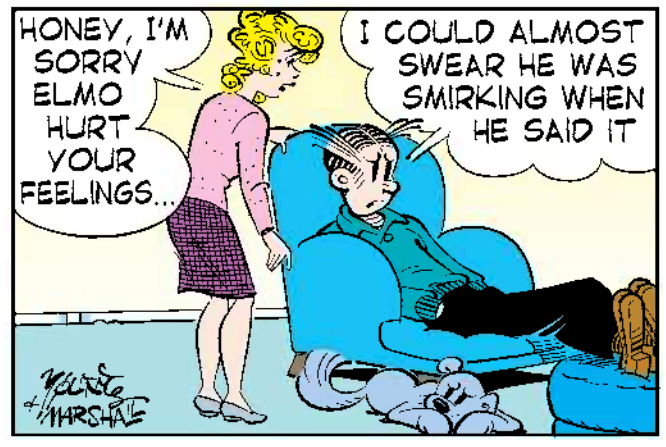
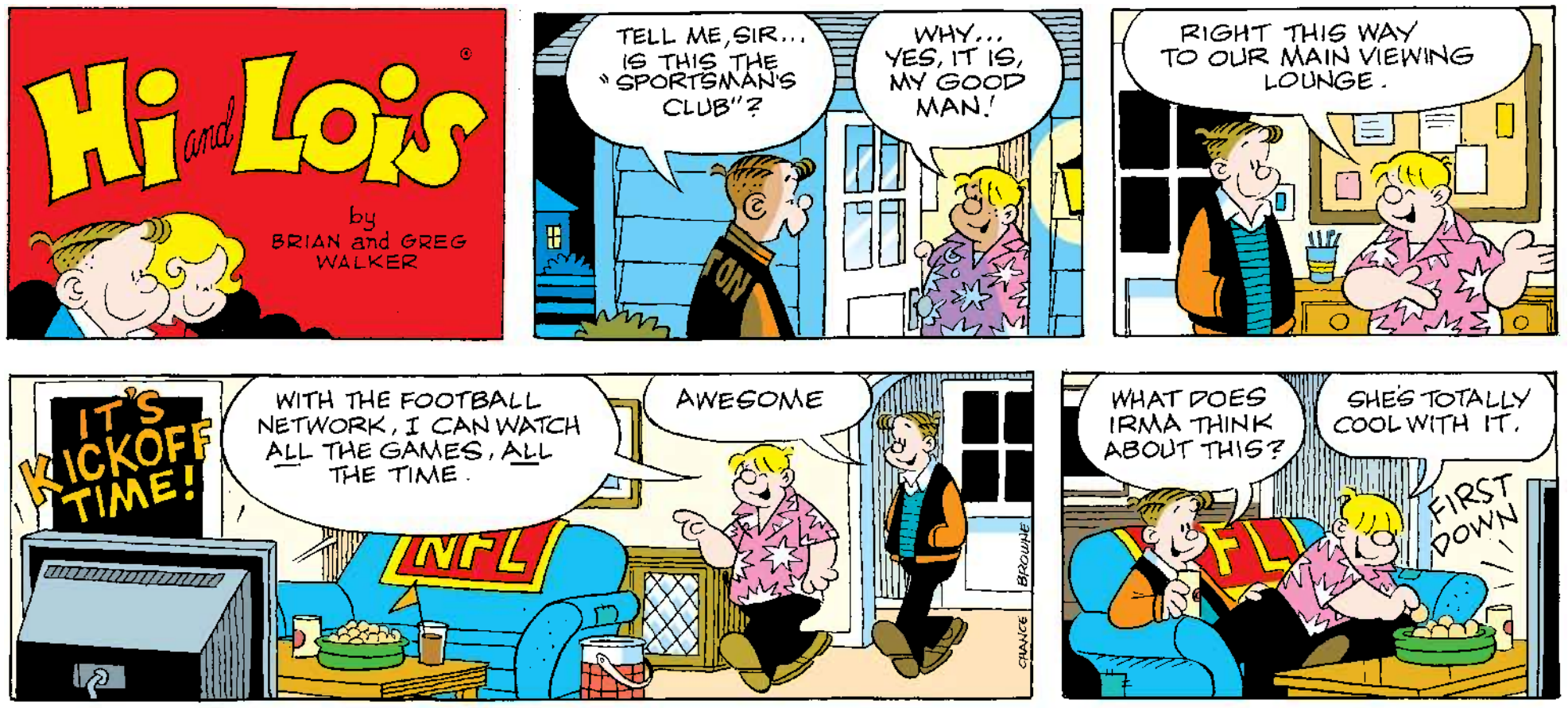


Hi and Lois

by BRIAN and GREG WALKER


TELL ME, SIR... IS THIS THE "SPORTSMAN'S CLUB"?
WHY... YES, IT IS, MY GOOD MAN!
RIGHT THIS WAY TO OUR MAIN VIEWING LOUNGE.
IT'S KICKOFF TIME!
WITH THE FOOTBALL NETWORK, I CAN WATCH ALL THE GAMES, ALL THE TIME.
AWESOME
NFL
BROWNE
CHANCE
WHAT DOES IRMA THINK ABOUT THIS?
SHE'S TOTALLY COOL WITH IT.
FIRST DOWN
WHERE IS SHE?
AT SOME MEETING.
SHOP TILL YOU DROP
I CHARGE MY HUSBAND $100 FOR EVERY GAME HE WATCHES
NEW FWOA Credit Card!
RIGHT ON, SISTER!
FOOTBALL WIDOWS OF AMERICA
HEALTH SPA
MALL TRIP NEXT SUNDAY
FWOA SIGN UP
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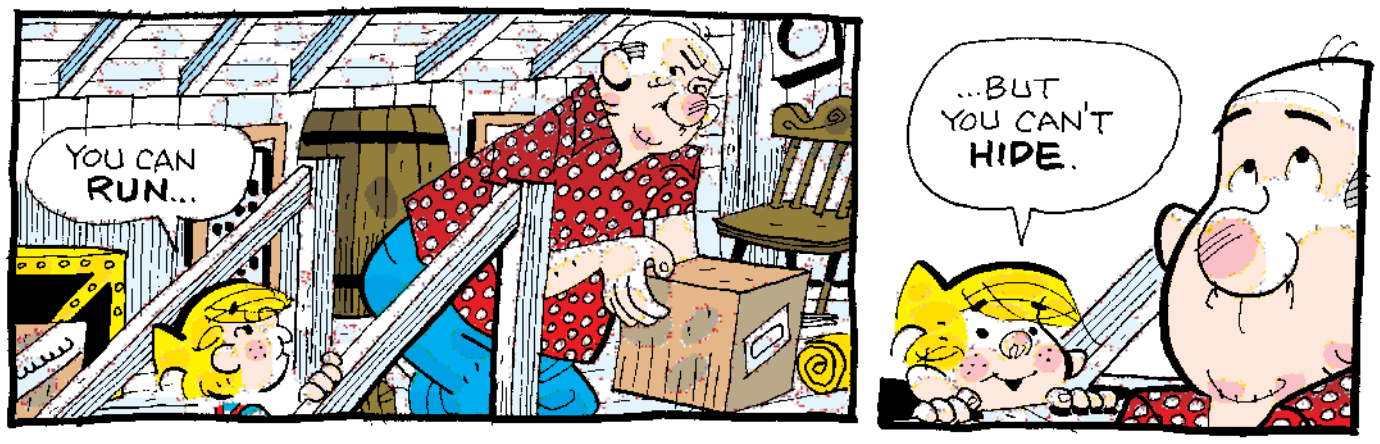
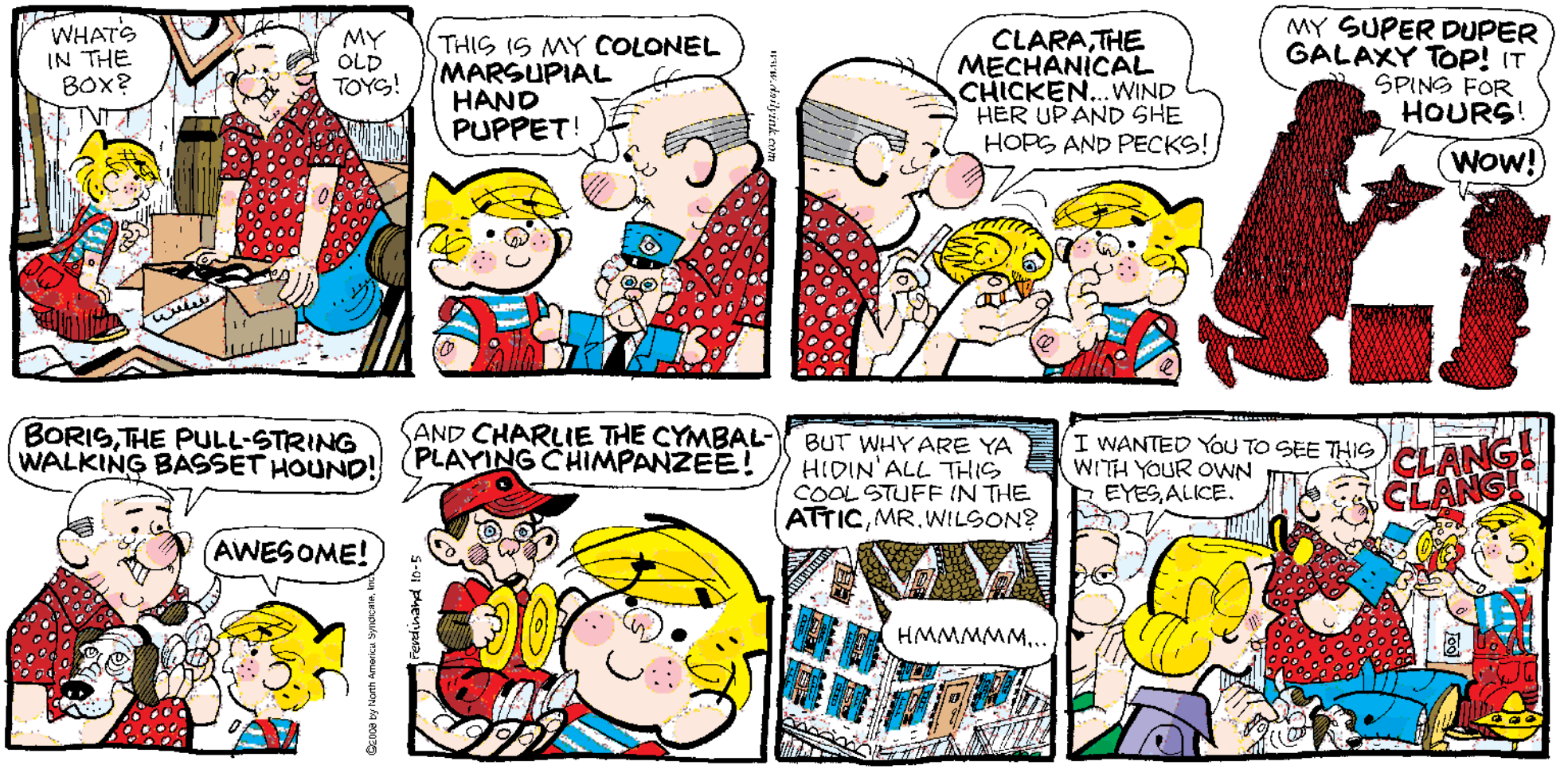
10-5

Hank Ketcham's Dennis the Menace

Babes In Toyland




WHAT'S IN THE BOX?
MY OLD TOYS!
THIS IS MY COLONEL MARSUPIAL HAND PUPPET!
CLARA, THE MECHANICAL CHICKEN... WIND HER UP AND SHE HOPS AND PECKS!
MY SUPER DUPER GALAXY TOP! IT SPINS FOR HOURS!
WOW!
BORIS, THE PULL-STRING WALKING BASSET HOUND!
AWESOME!
AND CHARLIE THE CYMBAL-PLAYING CHIMPANZEE!
BUT WHY ARE YA HIDIN' ALL THIS COOL STUFF IN THE ATTIC, MR. WILSON?
HMMMMM...
I WANTED YOU TO SEE THIS WITH YOUR OWN EYES, ALICE.
CLANG! CLANG!
Ferdinand 10-5
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BABY BLUES™
BY RICK KIRKMAN & JERRY SCOTT
;GASP!; I HAVE A CHIN HAIR!
YOU MEAN CHINNY?
WAIT...
...YOU KNEW I HAD A CHIN HAIR, AND YOU NAMED IT?
I DIDN'T. ZOE DID.
WE EVEN MADE UP A SONG ABOUT HIM. WANNA' HEAR IT?
NO! I DON'T WANT TO HEAR A SONG YOU WROTE ABOUT MY CHIN HAIR!
ARE YOU SURE? IT'S TO THE TUNE OF "ROW, ROW, ROW YOUR BOAT."
WHERE ARE MY TWEEZERS?
GOT IT!
;POINK!;
;SIGH!; BYE, CHINNY.
AND GOOD RIDDANCE!
SHOULDN'T WE NOTIFY HIS NEXT OF KIN?
www.babyblues.com
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Salome's Stars

ARIES (March 21 to April 19) You might need to get more facts to help you work out those problems with your new project. As always, a friendly approach shows the charming Arian at his or her persuasive best.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20) Information is what energizes ambition, and this is a good time for the ambitious Bovine to expand his or her range of knowledge and to be ready for the challenges that lie ahead.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20) This is a good time to consider making some long-overdue decorating changes at home or in your workplace. A splash of color can help raise spirits, even on the grayest day.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22) Learn more. Earn more. That's the formula for Moon Children looking to expand their career horizons. Investigate the best places to get those training courses you'll need.

LEO (July 23 to August 22) Your creative side helps gain attention for many of your ideas. But don't neglect the practical aspects involved in implementing their move from paper to production. Good luck.

VIRGO (August 23 to September 22) A health problem should not be ignored. The sooner you check it out, the sooner you can deal with it and then move on. Some job advice comes from an unlikely source.

LIBRA (September 23 to October 22) A relationship takes an unexpected shift that could leave you puzzled and hurt. Asking for an explanation could help uncover the reason for this sudden turn of events.

SCORPIO (October 23 to November 21) Your busy schedule has drawn down much of your energy levels. Restore them by spending a well-earned time out enjoying the arts -- perhaps with that special someone.

SAGITTARIUS (November 22 to December 21) Make that presentation with confidence. Remember: When you show you believe in yourself, it helps persuade others that you truly know what you're doing.

CAPRICORN (December 22 to January 19) Although you usually prefer doing things on your own, a group effort might be advisable at this time. Try to keep an open mind about suggestions from colleagues.

AQUARIUS (January 20 to February 18) This could be a good time to reassess some of your recent decisions and see if any adjustments should be made based on facts that you might have just uncovered.

PISCES (February 19 to March 20) An emotionally charged situation creates uncertainty about the future of your relationship. Best advice: Talk things out while there's still time to reach a new understanding.

BORN THIS WEEK: You tend to act on matters of principle despite what others might advise.

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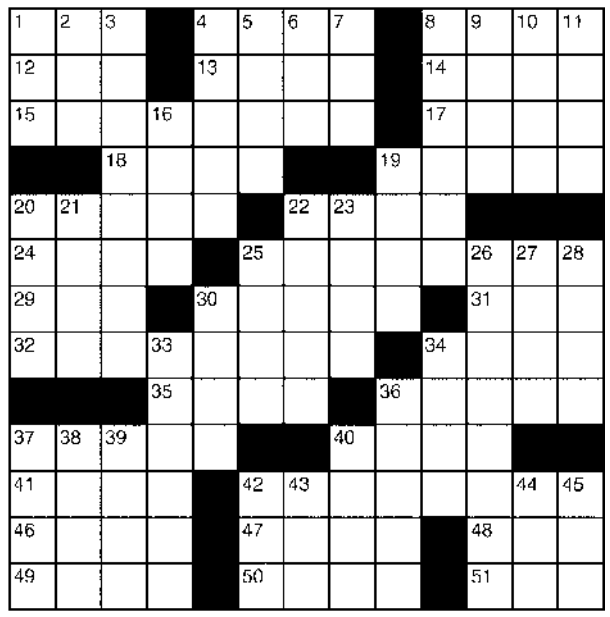
King Crossword



ACROSS
1 — Mahal
4 "Clue" weapon
8 Piquancy
12 Buckeyes' sch.
13 Mideast gulf
14 Jam ingredient?
15 Periodical
17 Food
18 Singer Campbell
19 O. Henry's specialty
20 Island flora
22 Greet silently
24 Rainbow
25 Tramp
29 X rating?
30 Buffalo
31 Victory gesture
32 Annoying follower
34 Astute
35 Lightning stroke
36 Hitchcock menacers
37 Large, showy parrot
40 Congers, e.g.
41 Grand story
42 19th-century violin virtuoso
46 Carte
47 Hebrew month
48 Menagerie
49 Erstwhile partners
50 Lincoln in-law
51 Ostrich's cousin

DOWN
1 Male cat
2 Simile center
3 Circus clown's skill
4 Demolishes
5 Valhalla bigwig
6 Calligraphy tool
7 Away from WSW
8 Capital of Croatia
9 Modern coin
10 Dazzle
11 Jug that resembles a stout man
16 Charitable donations
19 Terrible guy?
20 Actor Brad
21 Vicinity
22 Failed to be
23 Enthusiastic, plus
25 String instrument
26 Too big
27 Requirement
28 Lairs
30 Spend lavishly
33 Old computer?
34 Oven
36 Part of a Santa outfit
37 Cultural idea
38 Pinnacle
39 Movie
40 "Zounds!"
42 Vanna's cohort
43 Commotion
44 Artesian appellation
45 Debtor's letters

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top ten Noisiest dogs

1. Beagle
2. Collie
3. Doberman Pinscher
4. Finnish Spitz
5. German Shepherd
6. Norwegian Elkhound
7. Rottweiller
8. Shetland Sheepdog
9. Terriers
10. Toy and Miniature Poodles

Source: "Planet Dog: A Doglopedia"

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KING CROSSWORD LAST SUNDAY'S ANSWERS

S	C	A	M	■	U	F	O	■	E	O	N	S
C	O	C	A	■	R	O	W	■	T	R	E	O
A	M	E	S	■	B	O	N	E	H	E	A	D
R	E	D	H	E	A	D	■	K	N	O	T	S
■	■	■	I	N	N	■	L	E	I	■	■	■
P	A	L	E	D	■	R	E	D	C	O	A	T
O	R	E	■	■	L	O	G	■	■	I	D	O
P	E	A	C	O	A	T	■	V	A	L	O	R
■	■	■	H	A	G	■	L	I	B	■	■	■
I	D	I	O	T	■	P	E	A	S	O	U	P
D	U	C	K	S	O	U	P	■	O	G	L	E
E	P	E	E	■	A	P	E	■	R	E	N	O
M	E	S	S	■	R	A	W	■	B	E	A	N

United States

Jobs disappear at fastest rate in 5 years

ACROSS THE NATION

Palin questions McCain's concession of Michigan

SAN ANTONIO (AP)—Sarah Palin questioned Republican presidential candidate John McCain's decision to abandon efforts to win Michigan, a campaign move she only learned about Friday morning when she read it in the newspapers. In an interview with Fox News Channel Friday, the Alaska governor said she was disappointed that the McCain campaign decided to stop competing in Michigan. In an indication that the vice presidential candidate had not been part of the decision, she said she had "read that this morning and I fired off a quick e-mail" questioning the move. Palin acknowledged the GOP ticket's lackluster poll ratings in the state, but said: "I want to get back to Michigan and I want to try."

Wells Fargo agrees to buy Wachovia; Citi objects

NEW YORK (AP)—A battle broke out Friday for control of Wachovia, as Wells Fargo agreed to pay $14.8 billion for the struggling bank, while Citigroup and federal regulators insisted that Citi's earlier and lower-priced takeover offer go forward. The surprise announcement that Wachovia Corp. agreed to be acquired by San Francisco-based Wells Fargo & Co. in the all-stock deal - without government assistance - upended what had appeared to be a carefully examined arrangement and caught regulators off guard. Wells' original offer totaled about $15.1 billion, but since the value of its shares closed down 60 cents Friday, the deal is now valued at about $14.8 billion.

Officials finish at Fossett site as storm blows in

MAMMOTH LAKES, Calif. (AP)—Investigators finished up Friday at the scene of Steve Fossett's plane crash in the wilderness of the Sierra Nevada just as dark clouds rolled in and winds picked up ahead of a storm that threatened to bury any remaining evidence under 2 feet of snow. They discovered three more bone fragments Friday, said Madera County Sheriff's Department spokeswoman Erica Stuart. Like a piece found the day before, they will be sent to a lab to determine whether they are human and a match for Fossett, the famous adventurer. Mangled and charred plane parts and other bundles of debris were headed to a warehouse in Sacramento where investigators planned to lay them out for examination.

Calif. reps' brother among 2 missing boaters

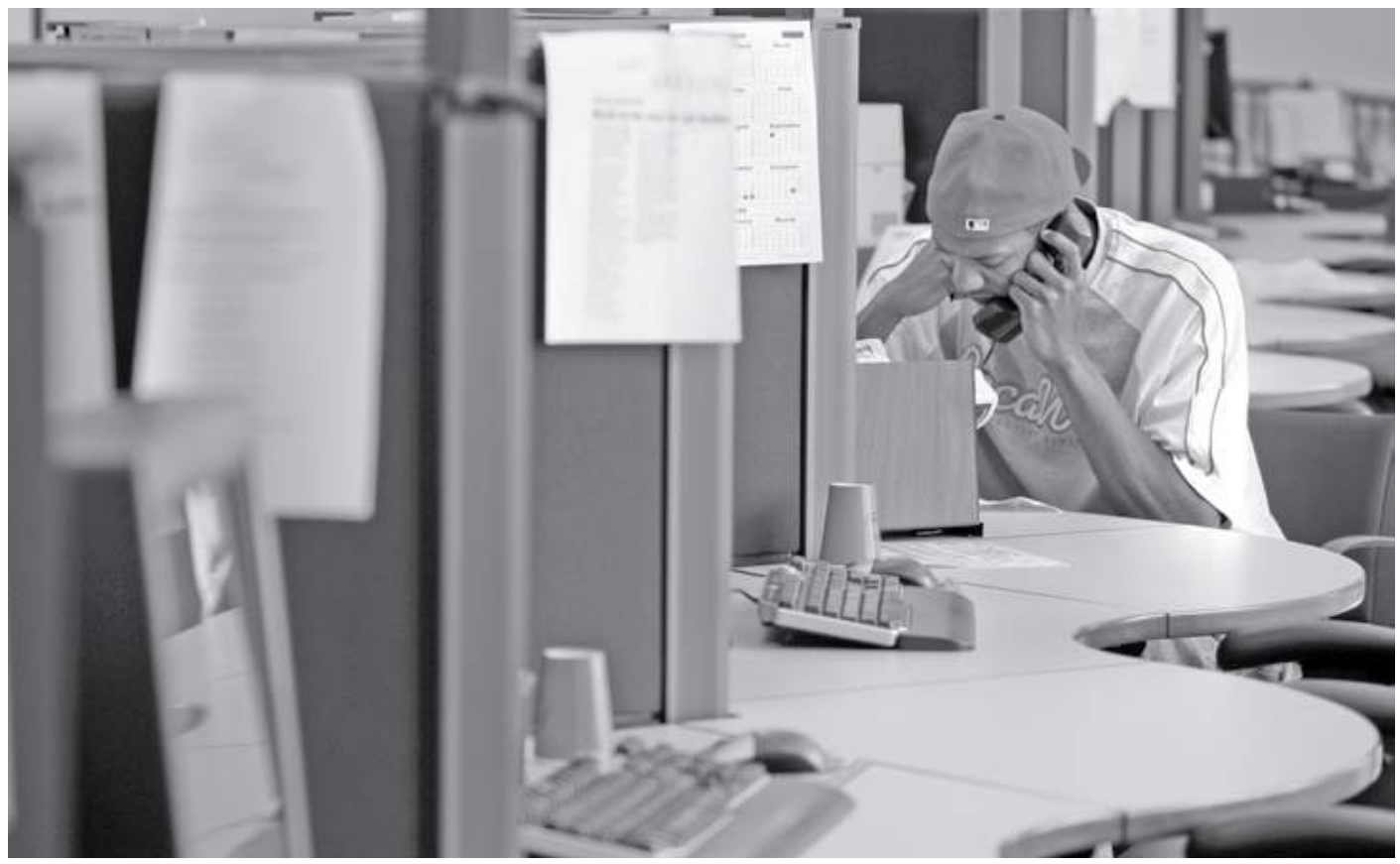
LOS ANGELES (AP)—The brother of Congresswomen Loretta and Linda Sanchez and his girlfriend were missing Friday after their boat was apparently destroyed, possibly in a collision with a barge outside the nation's largest port complex. A debris field found in the ocean contained fragments from the 26-foot boat Henry Sanchez was aboard with his girlfriend, Penny Avila, the Sanchez sisters said in a statement issued in Washington. The Coast Guard said Friday night that the boat may have collided with a barge being towed about 5 miles south of the Los Angeles harbor entrance.

7 killed in fiery Ala. collision on rural road

MONTGOMERY, Ala. (AP)—A collision between an 18-wheeler and a state van Friday left a fiery, mangled heap on a rural highway and killed six applicants for prison jobs and their driver, authorities said. Prison system spokesman Brian Corbett said all seven aboard the van died. Flames that rose from the twisted wreckage made it difficult for responders to cut into the overturned van to recover the bodies. The process took several hours, and towing company workers said the wreck was among the worst they'd seen. The crash happened Friday morning on an isolated stretch of U.S. 82 as Department of Corrections employee ferried the job applicants from a state prison near Union Springs to another DOC prison, Corbett said.

Driver dead after car crashes into RI high school

LINCOLN, R.I. (AP)—A car crashed through an entrance at a Rhode Island high school and burst into flames, killing the driver, police and witnesses said. No students were hurt. School secretary Carmel Mendoza told reporters that the driver was a special education teacher's aide at Lincoln High School. Police and school officials would not identify the victim, citing the investigation. An autopsy will be conducted Saturday. Students had been dismissed about an hour before the crash, Superintendent Georgia Fortunado said. Mendoza said she and another employee tried to pull the man from the burning car after it crashed.



AP

George Williams uses a phone in the resource center at Pennsylvania Career Link in Harrisburg, Pa., Friday, Oct. 3, 2008. WIlliams is looking for work.

More losses seen as US prepares for elections

By JEANNINE AVERSA
AP ECONOMICS WRITER

WASHINGTON (AP)—U.S. jobs are vanishing at the fastest pace in more than five years and likely to continue disappearing, an urgent signal the country may be careening toward a deep and painful recession just as Americans prepare to elect a new president.

Either Democrat Barack Obama or Republican John McCain will be dealing with the weakest employment climate in years.

Increasingly skittish employers dropped the ax even harder in September, chopping payrolls by 159,000—more than double the cuts made just one month before. It was the ninth straight month of job losses. A staggering 760,000 jobs have disappeared so far this year.

The Labor Department's report, released Friday, also showed that the U.S. unemployment rate was 6.1 percent, up sharply from 4.7 percent a year ago. Over the last year, the number of unemployed people has risen by 2.2 million to 9.5 million.

"Washington, the labor market has a problem," said Joel Naroff, president of Naroff Economic Advisors. "Firms are hunkering down and running as lean as possible. ... We are likely to see more months of job losses before conditions turn around."

The unemployment rate for blacks shot up to 11.4 percent, the highest since late 2003.

Even with Congress' unprecedented $700 billion financial bailout, the faltering economy and the jobs market probably will get worse. Many believe the economy will jolt into reverse later this year—if it hasn't already—and will stay sickly well into next year.

The unemployment rate could hit 7 or 7.5 percent by late 2009. If that happens, it would mark the highest since after the 1990-91 recession. Some economists say the jobless rate could rise even more before the situation starts to get better.

Pressure is growing on Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke to do an about-face and lower a key interest rate in a bid to revive the economy. Many now think that will happen at the Fed's next meeting on Oct. 28-29 or even earlier.

The hope riding on such a move would be to spur nervous consumers and businesses to spend more freely again. They have clamped down as housing, credit and financial problems intensified last month, throwing Wall Street into chaos.

On Wall Street, the Dow Jones industrials slid 157.47 points after relief over the bailout plan's passage gave way to worries about the economy.

Friday's employment snapshot is the last before America goes to the polls in November.

Mounting job losses, shrinking paychecks, shriveling nest eggs and rising foreclosures all have weighed heavily on American voters.

White House spokesman Tony Fratto called the latest employment figures disappointing "but not unexpected given the shocks to the economy."

Paulson pledges speed in implementing bailout

By MARTIN CRUTSINGER and CHARLES BABINGTON
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITERS

WASHINGTON (AP)—Signed and sealed, the $700 billion bailout now must be delivered.

After 14 days, three votes and billions of dollars in stock market losses to get the massive financial rescue through Congress, the government is rushing to develop a plan for spending the money.

Still, it will likely be at least a month before money is flowing to ailing financial institutions from the bill signed by President George W. Bush shortly after it passed the House of Representatives on Friday.

Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson said he did not wait for final approval to begin preparation. He has been lining up outside advisers as his staff worked out details on a multitude of complex issues.

Paulson

For instance, the government must decide how to determine which bad assets to buy from banks and how they will be bought. One possibility being considered is a process known as a reverse auction in which the winners would be the financial firms willing to sell their assets for less money to the government, say 50 cents on the dollar instead of 60 cents.

"We have been doing a lot of work, a lot of thinking, getting ready for this," Paulson told reporters at Treasury. "We will be going out and lining up some advisers from the private sector."

The bill, H.R. 1424, all 451 pages of it, gives Treasury the power to spend up to $700 billion to buy bad debt from banks, credit unions, thrifts and insurance companies. The hope is that as their books are shored up, trust will be restored to the financial system, banks will begin lending again and it will start the economy on the road to recovery.

Over the next few weeks, the government will have to determine what price to pay for complex mortgage-backed securities that have plunged in value because of the worst slump in housing in decades. The goal is to take enough of these toxic assets off the books of financial institutions to bring an end to the severe credit crisis, which has caused the biggest upheaval on Wall Street since the 1929 stock market crash.

To help them do that, Treasury expects to retain at least five and maybe as many as 10 asset management companies to operate the program, a department official said.

Asia

Suspected US strikes kill 19

DERA ISMAIL KHAN, Pakistan (AP)—Two suspected U.S. missile strikes Friday on villages close to the border with Afghanistan killed at least 19 people, most of them militants, Pakistani intelligence officials said.

American forces recently ramped up cross-border operations against Taliban and al-Qaida militants in Pakistan's border zone with Afghanistan - a region considered a likely hiding place for Osama bin Laden.

Two missiles believed to have been fired from U.S. unmanned drones launched from neighboring Afghanistan hit the villages in North Waziristan just before dusk, according to the officials who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak to the media.

Chief Pakistani army spokesman Maj. Gen. Athar Abbas said officers were investigating the reported strikes, but could not confirm them. U.S. officials in Afghanistan or Washington rarely acknowledge the attacks.

One attack in Mohammadkhel village west of of Miran Shah - the main town in North Waziristan tribal agency - killed at least 19 people, most of them alleged militants and some foreigners, the intelligence officials said, citing agents in the field.

There were no reported casualties in the other strike in the village of Khata Kaly, they said.

Chinese pandas fed chicken soup for health

BEIJING (AP)—Everyone needs some chicken soup for the soul—even pandas.

The Wuhan Zoo in central China has been feeding its two pandas home-cooked chicken soup twice in a month to reduce stress and give them a nutritional boost, a zoo official said Friday.

He Zhihua said 3-year-old Xiwang and Weiwei—literally meaning "Hope" and "Greatness"—were tired and suffering from a little shock since the start Monday of the weeklong National Day holiday, one of the biggest travel seasons of the year.

On Wednesday, up to 30,000 people swarmed the zoo and about 1,000 tourists packed the panda enclosure, shouting to get the animals' attention, He said. The pandas paced restlessly.

"They had been getting less sleep, and they had to run around more," he said. "We felt it would be good to give them the soup because they were fatigued and had a bit of a shock."

In this June 5, 2008 file photo, visitors look at a giant panda through the protective glass of a renovated panda hall inside a zoo in Beijing, China.

AP

ASIAN BRIEFS

US envoy's visit did not stop NKorea nuclear work

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—A senior U.S. envoy's trip to North Korea did not stop the communist nation from restoring its nuclear facilities, the State Department said Friday. Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill returned to South Korea from a three-day trip to the North to try to salvage a six-party disarmament pact after North Korea reversed the dismantlement of its nuclear facilities. He was hoping to draw the regime back to the negotiating table with an offer of a face-saving compromise. But State Department spokesman Robert Wood in Washington told reporters the North was still moving equipment from its nuclear facilities it had put in storage back to its original location.

Ex-Khmer Rouge soldiers tried for murder of Briton

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia (AP)—Five former Khmer Rouge soldiers accused of killing a British mine-clearing expert 12 years ago testified Friday that another soldier shot the man in the head as he sat in the dark at their remote base, illuminated only by car headlights. Christopher Howes, 37 at the time of his death, was abducted in March 1996 by the Khmer Rouge along with Cambodian co-workers while clearing mines near Angkor Wat, the famed 12th century temple complex in the country's northwest. The one-day trial for his murder ended late Friday after closing statements from the prosecution and defense. The judge, Iv Kim Sri, said he would deliver his verdict on Oct. 14.

Chinese shopping mall selling Mao Zedong's plane

A shopping mall where the late Chinese leader's official plane is on display in the southern boomtown of Zhuhai needs to make room for parking, an executive of the mall's owner said Friday. "We decided to sell the plane to make more parking space because we are short of parking places," Wang Zhilei, general manager of Zhuhai Ridong Group, told The Associated Press. Wang declined to disclose the asking price or other details. The British-made Trident jetliner was retired in 1986 and was sold to the mall's owners in 1999, according to the Chinese newspaper Southern Metropolis Daily. Wang said that report was accurate. ***(AP)***

Malaysian couple killed in stop-smoking ritual

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia (AP)—Relatives beat a Malaysian couple to death in a ritual apparently meant to help the man to stop smoking, police said Friday. The couple died of head injuries after being beaten with broomsticks and motorbike helmets during a family gathering at a Kuala Lumpur home Wednesday, said Ku Chin Wah, head of the city's crime investigations department. One of the couple's sons and three other relatives remain in custody. Four other detained family members have been released, Ku said.

World

Blast kills 7 Russian soldiers

TBILISI, Georgia (AP)—A car exploded Friday, killing seven soldiers outside Russia's military headquarters in South Ossetia, and Russian authorities charged it was a terrorist bombing meant to wreck the tense cease-fire that ended their war with Georgia.

Georgia's Interior Ministry blamed Russia, accusing it of arranging the blast to provide a pretext for delaying next week's scheduled withdrawal of Russian troops from Georgian territory around South Ossetia and another Kremlin-backed separatist region, Abkhazia.

The explosion, which the Russian military said also wounded eight Russian soldiers, was the deadliest single incident reported in South Ossetia since Russia and Georgia fought a five-day war over the breakaway region in August.

Under the Western-backed truce, European Union monitors have begun replacing Russian troops in the buffer zone ringing South Ossetia and the withdrawal is supposed to be completed by Oct. 11.

The Kremlin declined to comment on whether the carnage might affect the pullout timetable under its truce with this former Soviet republic.

Iraq's presidency OKs elections law

BAGHDAD (AP)—Iraq's presidential council on Friday ratified a law that paves the way for the first provincial elections in four years, officials said.

U.S. officials hope the election will give greater representation to minority Sunni Arabs and disaffected members of the Shiite majority.

Friday's ratification will allow preparations to go ahead for the vote, which must be held by Jan. 31. But it came only after Iraqi lawmakers agreed to set aside the divisive issues of power-sharing in an oil-rich northern region and the representation of minorities.

Iraq's parliament approved the law unanimously on Sept. 24 following months of deadlock centering on a Kurdish-Arab dispute over the city of Kirkuk, which the Kurds seek to incorporate into their semiautonomous region in the north.

Stable Iraq could influence Mideast

By ROBERT H. REID
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

ANALYSIS

BAGHDAD (AP)—As violence in Iraq recedes, neighboring states are pondering how to deal with an unwieldy country that could re-emerge as a key player along with Saudi Arabia and Iran in one of the world's most strategic regions.

The role of regional power broker may seem far-fetched for Iraq—a devastated land best known for car bombs, death squads and suicide attackers.

Still, countries of the Middle East cannot ignore the potential role of a resurgent Iraq, a nation of 28 million people, bordering Iran to the east, Syria and Jordan to the west and sitting on one of the world's major pools of oil.

For those reasons, the United States cannot afford to lose focus on Iraq, which will remain a strategic and important country even after the last of the 140,000 American soldiers have gone home.

Clearly Iraq is a long way from re-establishing itself as a major force in the region. In a first step, however, representatives of 35 international oil companies are to meet this month with Iraq's oil minister in London to discuss improving Iraqi gas and oil fields. Fellow Arab countries are talking about upgrading their relations with Iraq.

Iraq is likely to play a significant role in America's Middle East policy for decades—even as the Pentagon scales down military operations here and ramps them up in Afghanistan.

The Middle East has long confounded forecasters, and the rosy predictions from the Bush administration that Iraq would emerge as a beacon of Western-style democracy in the Arab world have been long discredited.

However unlikely it may seem today, a relatively stable Iraq would have all the cards necessary to emerge as a major player in the Persian Gulf, where Saudi Arabia and Iran are competing for leadership.

Those three countries account for most of the population and most of the oil in the Gulf, which has about 60 percent of the world's proven reserves.

How the three deal with one another will shape the Middle East for decades.

Iraq's vast oil reserves alone should guarantee the country a major regional role.

Current estimates put Iraq's proven oil reserves at 115 billion barrels. But many experts believe that figure could rise by another 70 billion to 80 billion barrels once better security allows for renewed exploration.

If those estimates prove accurate, Iraq would have the world's second-largest proven oil reserves behind Saudi Arabia and ahead of Iran.

As Iran and Saudi Arabia compete for influence in the region, each has a strong interest in using Iraq as leverage against the other.

Neither Iran nor Saudi Arabia can afford to have Iraq throw itself solidly behind the other. Each wants a stable Iraq—but not one strong enough to threaten its neighbors as when Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait in 1990.

In competing for influence in Iraq, Iran would seem to have the advantage. Most of Iran's nearly 70 million people are Shiites, the Muslim sect that includes about 60 percent of Iraq's population.

Iran offered asylum to thousands of Iraqi Shiites who fled Saddam's Sunni-dominated regime. Many of them returned home to assume positions of power after the U.S.-led invasion of 2003.

Somalia deaths climb, insurgents reject aid

MOGADISHU, Somalia (AP)—Help for hundreds of thousands of Somalis is in jeopardy, two international aid groups said Friday after Islamic insurgents forced one to suspend some operations and threatened the other.

The last two weeks have been especially bloody, with the United Nations estimating more than 80 civilians killed in the capital alone. Elisabeth Byrs, a spokeswoman for the U.N. humanitarian office in Geneva, said more than 100 people were injured in the same period.

Somalia is torn between a growing Islamic insurgency and a weak and corrupt U.N.-backed government propped up by troops from neighboring Ethiopia.

In recent months the insurgents have mounted a series of hit-and-run attacks on several towns and now hold Somalia's third-largest city.

Focus

THE WASHINGTON POST

Effective Friday, Louisiana is the last state to outlaw cockfighting, a blood sport viewed by animal advocates as cruel and by its proponents as part of their heritage. Here, a breeding establishment in Sunset, La.

With a Louisiana ban, cockfighting takes its national bow

By CAROL GUZY
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Clarence "Wooly" Bunch has been a cockfighter for more than 40 years and is the proprietor of the Little Rebel Game Club in this small town east of Baton Rouge. But these are the last days of legal cockfighting in Louisiana, and Bunch, an affable fellow with an easy laugh, feels "lost as a bat" as he contemplates his future. The former pipe fitter subsidizes his $600 a month in Social Security with derby winnings, but like other pit owners, he sees the blood sport as being about something more.

"It's my heritage," he says. "I guess there are other people that want to be president of the United States or senators or whatever. Me, I want to be a cockfighter. ... I would rather do it out in the wide open where everyone knows it and sees it because I am not ashamed of cockfighting."

Cockfight aficionados argue that the new law, which went into effect Friday, will merely drive cockfighting underground, like dogfighting rings. Sitting on an armchair in his mobile home with his dog TooToo nuzzling his chin, Bunch says cockfighting isn't in the same category as dogfighting. "Dogs are your friend. ... Not to say I don't like my chickens, but they are not my friend," he says.

Louisiana is the last state to outlaw cockfighting. In 33 states, it is a felony. Virginia recently toughened its law to make even attending organized fights a felony. The sport, still popular in countries including Mexico and the Philippines, remains legal in the U.S. territories of Puerto Rico, Guam and American Samoa.

'Barbaric'

Animal advocacy organizations applaud the closing of the final legal venue in the United States for a blood sport they view as cruel and barbaric.

"It has been a monumental struggle involving lots of people and very many protests, economics, twists and turns," says anesthesiologist James Riopelle. A past president of the state's humane society coalition, he organized protests at the Sunset Recreation Club, which he calls the "Super Bowl of cockfighting." The doctor is considered by animal welfare groups to be a hero of Hurricane Katrina for refusing to abandon the dozens of animals left in his care by residents during the evacuation of New Orleans. Riopelle thinks the national focus on the state after the storms gave the legislature more incentive to take action against an activity perceived as unacceptable by the rest of the country.

But there is a sentiment among cockfighters that being sanctioned for their pastime by those who dine on chicken from factory farms is hypocritical. They raise their roosters for two years, vaccinate and feed them and say the birds at least have a fighting chance of remaining alive. Enthusiasts insist they simply perpetuate the inherent nature of the species, that it would be impossible to stop this jungle breed from fighting. To prevent carnage in the yard, the birds must be tethered apart.

Dying breed

Some of those engaged in cockfighting view themselves as a dying breed and will reluctantly let go rather than hide their activities. Others insist they will find a way to fight their fowl.

"We ain't barbaric and we ain't hurting nobody," insists Bunch's longtime friend Chris Stewart. He feels outsiders don't understand a culture that is centuries old and had been a hobby of presidents. The story is retold countless times about how "Honest Abe" Lincoln got his name as a cockfight referee.

"They got us down like we outlaws and, well, if we are, Washington, Jefferson, Jackson—all of our presidents—they had them, so they must not have been low-life trash or they wouldn't have been presidents of the United States," Bunch says. "Changing your heritage, well, I don't see where they should think about nothing like that. Now if it's something immoral or improper, I can understand it."

THE WASHINGTON POST

"It's my heritage," says Clarence "Wooly" Bunch, who's been a cockfighter for more than 40 years and who runs the Little Rebel Game Club in Holden. Louisiana is the last state to outlaw cockfighting; its ban went into effect Friday.

Carter Kinchen, of Tickfaw, La., declares: "Religion and cockfighting built this country." Faith, heritage and patriotism are often uttered in the same breath with cockfighting as Kinchen discusses Louisiana's ban.

"First cockfight I saw, all I could see was me. ... That was me fighting for what I believe in," says Kinchen, who was introduced to the sport in 1965 after serving in Vietnam. "The love for a game fowl is just deep in my heart, just as much as it is for my wife," he says.

Going underground

This night's fight in Holden is a Three-Cock Gaff Derby. Friends gather at dusk, exchanging pleasantries and weighing their birds. There is a festive air, with families bringing their children, and there is free food, compliments of Chris Stewart's wife, also named Chris, who proudly describes how her young grandson just bagged his first deer.

Weapons are usually strapped to the legs of each rooster. Some prefer razor-sharp knives, but with gaffs that resemble three-inch ice picks, the fights last longer, Bunch explains. As roosters face off in the circle, hoots and hollers echo throughout the bleachers sprinkled with spectators. Gambling at cockfights has been illegal since the passage of a state Senate bill last year, but the winner of the derby collects a purse from entry fees.

The spectacle begins, and a flurry of feathers flashes as the birds engage in a furious, fatal dance. Men try to revive the faltering roosters by sucking from their beaks the blood pooled in their lungs. Some wounded birds continue to drag themselves around the pit until, finally, with a mortal stab, the bird dies. The limp body is carried to the trash.

"In a way, it's a loss and you feel for the bird itself because you know he did the best he could," Bunch says.

The victor may live to fight again. The exultant winner of this night's derby is Richard Sparks, who brought his two sons with him. They pose with Bunch and the trophy that will adorn their home.

Illegal gambling

Chris Stewart has spent many Friday nights at this small country pit. She's decided to replace the fighting roosters she bred on her land with pigs raised for food. She is concerned about raids once the ban is enforced. "I'm afraid it's going to get really ugly. They know where we fight," she says.

Kinchen and his wife, Barbara, ran an establishment called the Milkdairy Game Club until they were raided last year after an undercover investigation by state police and Livingston Parish sheriffs and arrested on illegal gambling and other charges. A grand jury later indicted the Kinchens only on drug possession charges. They were acquitted but couldn't breathe life back into the business. Kinchen's daddy raised him to be strong, he says, so they view this as simply another obstacle in their road together. They already have faced a parent's worst tragedy, losing two sons. Their 16-year-old died in a car wreck and their 21-year-old son deployed to Iraq never returned, dying in his bunk.

That has not rocked their faith. Kinchen believes part of that faith tells him God gave humans dominion over animals. Their home is filled with memorabilia and knickknacks of the spectacularly plumed birds that endlessly crow from the tin tepee shelters that dot their land. A solid gold rooster hangs around Kinchen's neck, a gift from Barbara. He now considers turning the pit into a museum but staunchly refuses to give up his roosters.

"I'm going to just go underground," he says, "fight them here and yonder. If they come to take them, I'm going to die."

Over in Sunset, La., Herman LaGrange has a yard full of game fowl and a flag on his carport with the image of a rooster that appears to fade away as it flaps in the wind. It serves as a metaphor for these dwindling days of lawful cockfighting.

"It's a tradition. My grandfather, my daddy, myself," LaGrange says. His tidy home is deep in Cajun country and just down the block from the Sunset Recreation Club, a large organized pit that closed after gambling on cockfights became illegal. Weary of the political maneuverings and uneasy with the thought of doing anything illegal, he has decided to get out of the business. He ponders the future:

"Well, I guess I'll have to get some fishing stuff."

Life & Style

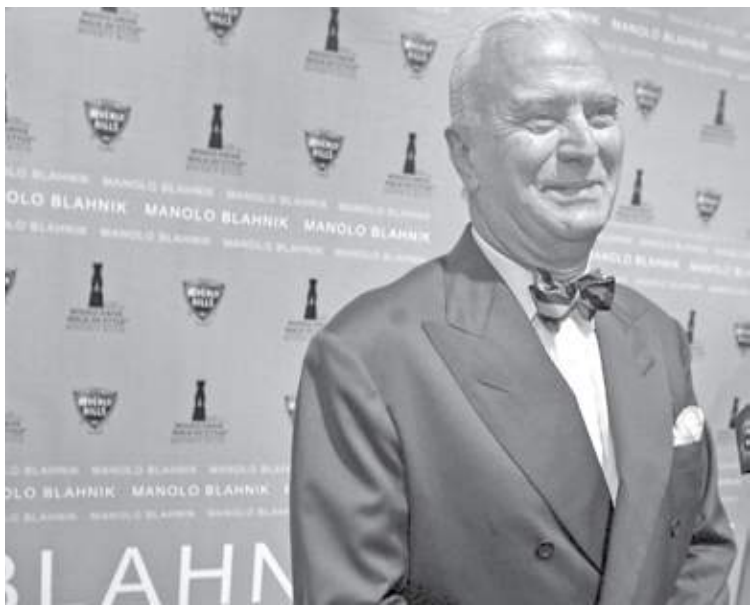
Manolo Blahnik

By EMILI VESILIND
(C) 2008, LOS ANGELES TIMES

Manolo Blahnik became a household name when "Sex and the City" made his sexy stilettos practically a member of the cast. But before Carrie Bradshaw started giving him shout-outs, the shoe guru already was a star to the well-heeled women who wear and collect his designs—a list that includes Madonna, Bianca Jagger and Diane von Furstenberg.

Blahnik's shoes are a perennial on Hollywood red carpets—as common as Spanx and cleavage tape. Last week, Hollywood thanked the designer for his contributions to the entertainment and fashion industries by awarding him the Rodeo Drive Walk of Style Award. Past recipients of the annual award, which is given by the city of Beverly Hills and the Rodeo Drive Committee, have included Tom Ford and Salvatore Ferragamo.

Known for his whimsical, color-drenched takes on the classic stiletto (priced from $525 to $2,685), Blahnik sparked the current craze for designer shoes with artisan pedigrees—paving the road to success for posh footwear brands, including Christian Louboutin and Jimmy Choo. In Los Angeles, Blahnik devotees shop at Neiman Marcus in Beverly Hills, which showcases the brand in its own section, and his most fervent admirers turned up at the department store Friday to have their heels signed by the man himself.



LOS ANGELES TIMES
Manolo Blahnik was recognized by Hollywood for contributions to the entertainment and fashion industries with the Rodeo Drive Walk of Style Award.

The designer, who's fond of wearing bow ties and Saville Row suits, zipped into town to accept the Walk of Style award—the latest in a growing list of accolades he's accrued over the years, including awards for outstanding accessory design from the Council of Fashion Designers of America and the British Fashion Council. In 2003, the Design Museum in London staged a major exhibition of his work, and two years later, Blahnik dipped his well-shod foot into film (a genre he's eager to continue working in) when he crafted the ornate, flare-heeled shoes for Sofia Coppola's "Marie Antoinette," which won an Oscar for best costume design.

Blahnik's lifelong love of movies—particularly golden oldies starring screen sirens such as Rita Hayworth and Ann-Margret—is his reason for calling Los Angeles "a spiritual home" (the 65-year-old was mighty upset when he discovered that the Turner Classic Movies channel wasn't available at his hotel).

During his brief stay in Los Angeles, we sat down with the effervescent footwear phenom. Born in the Canary Islands but a longtime resident of London, he speaks with a heavy, lilting accent—and rapid-fire enthusiasm:

Question: You have on amazing shoes (Creamsicle-orange loafers with matching ribbons tacked to the fronts). Who made them?

Answer: My factory made these with my own lasts. I was going to do a combination of colors, but I thought no. It would be like an eccentric person in a madhouse or something. I was going to wear one violet and one orange, which is very matador.

Q: How do you feel about getting a star on Rodeo Drive?

A: It's beyond meaningful. Can you imagine? We're going to do it on Rodeo Drive, and that land belonged to Greta Garbo, one of the great movie actresses that I've adored forever. My father had a film projector ... and I was mesmerized by this woman. Here I am standing up in Greta's land. I love it.

Q: I've heard that you're still involved in the physical creation of each Manolo Blahnik shoe design. Is this true?

A: I design the last and the heel. Then I cut the pattern on plastic. I hate to do the sizing and things like that.

Q: You have designed all kinds of shoes—from flats and sandals to boots. Are there any shoe silhouettes you don't care for?

A: I don't do platforms. I find them ugly. I did them in the '70s when I was young—it was my thing. But they're dangerous, and they're just not very flattering for women's legs. No, no, no, no. I remember ('80s fashion icon) Tina Chow said, "Every time I put on a platform, I felt like I (had on) some sort of orthopedic shoe." And she was the chicest and most exquisite creature. Still, sometimes unconsciously when I design, I say, "I wonder if Tina likes this thing?"

Q: So you sometimes design with certain women in mind?

A: I used to, but I don't think it's very nice. I do have fantasies—like I love people of my time, like Julie Christie.

Q: What, in your opinion, is the most beautiful shoe silhouette?

A: A light, beautiful shoe. I like pumps. And it's the most difficult shoe for me to cut. It's got to be perfect. You've got to show just exactly the right amount of cleavage—just a little to suggest. I love thin heels, like this one (Blahnik picks up a satin stiletto with a narrow, 31/2-inch heel). Of course, every year you do longer or shorter in height, but I don't change very much. I also ... think it's fantastic to see a shoe lived in—when the heel's a little (he makes a "roughed-up" Motion). Maybe it's a perversion, I don't know, but I like it.

Q: Can we talk about shoe etiquette—when to wear or not wear certain shoes? Like, can you wear satin during the day?

A: Yes, I think so. I don't think there are rules any longer. Coming from England where all things work ... daytime, night, it all works.

I'm proper, I like to have a pump for evening. White shoes are for a wedding or daytime in summertime when it's hot and shimmering, yes. In the winter, if you're going to some kind of resort like Aspen, you can also wear them. I mean, why not?

Q: What are common mistakes that women make when buying and wearing heels?

A: This morning I saw there was a fashion show where the models were all falling to pieces on the runway (Prada). And a few days ago, I went to New York to attend the party for the launch of the "Sex and the City" DVD, and on the red carpet one model was going to (he feigns catching a stumbling model). Some women can't walk in them. To feel insecure is not very pleasant. They should maybe find a '70s or '50s shoe—chunky heels are good for the country and city.

LOS ANGELES TIMES
Jennifer Lopez wore this pair with a low-cut green dress at the 2000 Grammys.

LOS ANGELES TIMES
Manolos from "Sex and the City."

LOS ANGELES TIMES
Lucy Liu's gorgeous bejeweled Manolos traipsing down the red carpet in Beverly Hills, Calif.

Q: What do you think your business would be like now without the exposure you received on "Sex and the City?"

A: I don't know. I wouldn't have even dreamed of reaching that point of exposure.... We don't advertise very much—maybe Bazaar and Vogue, that's all. I'll be grateful forever to Miss (Sarah Jessica) Parker and Miss (Patricia) Field, the costumer. We did a series of shoes, and they chose whatever they wanted. We knew Miss Parker, knew what she liked, and this was the one they really loved (he holds up the midnight blue satin stiletto with the bejeweled buckle that Parker wore in the movie).

Celebrity Shoemaker

THREE WISE GUYS

THE WASHINGTON POST

The Washington Post offers Three Wise Guys, advice on life and other stuff from the male perspective, perpetrated by Post staffers, from left, Justin Rude, Joe Heim and Dan Zak. It may not be professional advice, but their responses to reader questions serve up a deft handling of any conceivable topic.

Toothbrush handles, aliens, cat food

By JOE HEIM, JUSTIN RUDE and DAN ZAK
(C) 2008, THE WASHINGTON POST

Dear Wise Guys: Why do toothbrush makers insist on making handles that are too fat? They don't fit into the holders that were made for them. Drives me nuts!—Frustrated

Joe: I feel your pain, Frustrated. I've replaced my toothbrush holder four times in six months just to accommodate the growing size of toothbrush handles.

Dan: There's actually a free toothbrush whittling workshop in Capitol Hill this Thursday. Just show up with your oversize brush and get ready to pare that sucker down to size.

Joe: I'm almost certain that's not true. Anyway, I called the folks at Colgate about this, and they told me the large handles "are ergonomically designed to fit comfortably and snugly in the hand" and that "while there is no standard size for toothbrush holders, an increasing number of manufacturers make holders with larger holes."

Justin: That's corporate speak for "just deal with it."

■ ■ ■ ■

Dear Wise Guys: Considering that no one would know from firsthand experience, why is the prevailing premise in most popular science fiction literature, cinema and television programs that aliens are evil and want to do harm to earthlings?—Gort

Dan: If the aliens were friendly, there would be no conflict and, hence, no movie. Can you imagine if the alien in "Alien" had burst out of John Hurt's stomach and said, "My word, I'm terribly sorry. Let's get some gauze for this chap"?

Joe: I don't buy the premise of the question. Mork was a friendly alien. And so were E.T. and Alf. And how about Jerry Maguire?

Justin: Jerry Maguire wasn't an alien.

Joe: No, but he was played by one.

■ ■ ■ ■

Dear Wise Guys: If a cat's natural prey is small critters like mice and birds, how come they don't make mouse-flavored cat food?—Phil

Joe: Cats can kill mice and small birds on their own. What they can't do is fish or take down a cow in a pasture. For those evasive species, they rely on the goodness of pet food makers to supply them with an infinite variety of tasty treats in shiny packages.

Justin: And they no more want a steady diet of mouse-flavored food than you would want to eat only Hot Pockets.

Dan: I once baited a mousetrap with a bit of Hot Pocket. We never caught the mouse, but the rest of the Hot Pocket was delicious.

■ ■ ■ ■

This week's motto: Three Prince Charmings Whose Knowledge Is Alarming (submitted by Christina Yao)

Have a question only the Three Wise Guys can answer? Send it to wiseguys@washpost.com and await their words of wise-dom.

Nobel speculation centers on rights activists

By KARL RITTER and DOUG MELLGREN
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITERS

STOCKHOLM, Sweden (AP)—Human rights activists from China and Russia are considered front-runners to win the Nobel Peace Prize next week, while bettors are putting their money on an Italian, a Syrian or an Israeli for the literature award.

The annual guessing game is in full swing as the prize committees prepare for their final meetings to single out achievements in science, economics, peace and literature for the $1.3 million awards.

While the selections for medicine, physics, chemistry and economics are usually met by approval from the scientific community, the peace and literature committees nearly always face accusations of political bias.

The top member of the Swedish Academy, which awards the literature prize, sparked a furor in U.S. literary circles this week by saying the United States is too insular and ignorant to challenge Europe as the center of the literary world.

But Horace Engdahl, the academy's permanent secretary, rejected the notion that politics has anything to do with Nobel decisions.

"One doesn't read literature with the same part of the brain as one votes for a political party," he told The Associated Press.

Peace Prize speculation is focusing on human rights, partly because 2008 is the 60th anniversary of the signing of the U.N. Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. Coincidentally, the declaration was signed on Dec. 10, the date of the annual Nobel Prize ceremonies and the anniversary of prize founder Alfred Nobel's death in 1896.

Peace researcher Stein Toennesson, whose picks tend to shape world speculation, was leaning toward Chinese dissidents Gao Zhisheng and Hu Jia, both arrested and jailed through the Beijing Olympics to keep them out of the public eye.

Toennesson, director of the Peace Research Institute in Oslo, said the prize committee might pick a Chinese activist "in view of the fact that the Olympic Games did not bring the improvement many had hoped for, but instead led to a number of strict security measures."

He also suggested Russian lawyer and activist Lidia Yusupova as a way of drawing attention to human rights abuses in Russia, and to remember Russian journalist Anna Politkovskaya, who was gunned down in 2006.

Another possible pick is Vietnamese Thich Quang, a Buddhist monk and dissident who has spent more than 25 years in detention for his peaceful protests against Vietnam's communist regime.

Toennesson also mentioned Iftikhar Mohammed Chaudhry, a Pakistani Supreme Court chief justice who was suspended after defying then-President Pervez Musharraf; as well as the Cluster Munitions Coalition for its role in drafting a treaty banning cluster bombs, or an organization such as Human Rights Watch.

"We always watch Stein Toennesson's predictions with interest," said Geir Lundestad, the prize committee's nonvoting secretary. Beyond that, he would only say there were 197 nominations and that the winner would be announced Oct. 10.

Last year, the Peace Prize was shared by former Vice President Al Gore and the U.N. panel on climate change for raising awareness about global warming.

The Swedish Academy has announced it will present the literature prize winner next Thursday.

Engdahl's comments to the AP drew anger in the U.S., where the head of the National Book Foundation offered to send Engdahl a reading list of American literature.

"Of course there is powerful literature in all big cultures, but you can't get away from the fact that Europe still is the center of the literary world ... not the United States," Engdahl said in the interview Tuesday.

He was speaking in general terms about American literature—the academy insists that nationality doesn't matter when it makes its pick.

The 16-member jury often selects obscure writers and rarely picks best-selling authors. It regularly faces accusations of snobbery, political bias and even poor taste.

Betting firm Ladbrokes gave the lowest odds Friday for Italian writer Claudio Magris, Syrian poet Adonis and Israeli author Amos Oz. They were followed by Americans Joyce Carol Oates, Philip Roth and Don DeLillo, all recurring names in Nobel speculation.

The announcements kick off Monday with the medicine prize, which typically honors breakthroughs that have furthered the understanding of killer diseases or helped develop treatments to cure them. Physics, chemistry, literature and peace will follow later in the week, while the economics award will be announced Oct. 13.

Nobel literature prize announced Oct. 9

STOCKHOLM, Sweden (AP) —The 2008 winner of the Nobel Prize in literature will be presented on Oct. 9, the Swedish Academy said Friday, completing the schedule of this year's Nobel announcements.

Engdahl

The secretive academy is not revealing any hints about its selection for the award, which many consider the highest accolade for writers. British betting firm Ladbrokes gives Italian writer Claudio Magris and Syrian poet Adonis the lowest odds for this year's prize.

The Swedish Academy is always the last of the Nobel Prize institutions to set a date for its prize announcement. The winner is always presented by permanent secretary Horace Engdahl at the academy's 18th century offices in Stockholm's Old Town.

The last U.S. writer to win the award was Toni Morrison in 1993. Americans Philip Roth and Joyce Carol Oates have figured in Nobel speculation for several years now, but have not been tapped.

Last year's literature award went to British writer Doris Lessing.

Yo-Yo Ma's new album takes spiritual journey

By MARTIN STEINBERG
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

NEW YORK (AP)—After musical trips to Appalachia, Brazil, Argentina, the Silk Road and baroque and modern Italy, Yo-Yo Ma has embarked on a spiritual journey.

His next CD, "Songs of Joy & Peace," is being released this month, just in time for those holiday trips over the river and through the woods to grandmother's house.

The 53-year-old cellist sees it as a musical house party with a wide variety of top artists jamming with Ma for the other guests. Even the audience gets an opportunity to join in the merriment.

He felt the urge to record something that he hopes will bring people together during these dangerous times.

"I wanted to do something that focuses on an idea rather than a place," Ma said in an interview. "Like Appalachian music or Brazilian or tango or the Silk Road, we were going to faraway regions. But then there are other things that join us together. And one of them is this seeking of the experience of joy in different places. And so in a way it's like creating a party that brings all my friends together from the different parts of life."

AP

In this image released by Sony BMG Masterworks, cellist Yo-Yo Ma poses with his cello.

Some of the songs are wondrous, such as a jazzed-up version of the Gregorian chant "Concordi Laetitia" by Matt and Dave Brubeck. Others—like a duet with western Massachusetts neighbor James Taylor in "Here Comes the Sun"—are soothing.

There's also the traditional—Alison Krauss' "Wexford Carol"—and the wild—Canadian Natalie MacMaster's jig and reel.

Starting with the lonesome melody of "Dona Nobis Pacem" ("Give Us Peace") played by Ma, the song becomes thicker and thicker as more of his recorded cello voices are layered in.

The 16th-century melody reemerges time after time, played in a variety of styles by artists such as the Brazilian guitarists Sergio and Odair Assad, bluegrass bassist Edgar Meyer and mandolinist Chris Thile and Cuban-American clarinetist Paquito D'Rivera and Israeli jazz pianist Alon Yavnai. Other artists on the CD include Diana Krall and Renee Fleming.

Judge bars footage of Anna Nicole's breast surgery

LOS ANGELES (AP)—A judge ordered a Texas doctor and his wife on Friday not to distribute videotaped footage of Anna Nicole Smith's breast augmentation surgery in 1994.

The order settles a lawsuit filed last year by Howard K. Stern, the executor of Smith's estate, who was trying to stop Dr. Gerald Johnson and his wife from distributing the tapes of the former Playboy Playmate.

Los Angeles County Superior Court Judge Mitchell Beckloff issued preliminary injunctions against the Johnsons more than a year ago before issuing his final decision.

Stern maintained that Smith never consented to the taping or to allowing the footage to be seen by Los Angeles memorabilia dealer Thomas Riccio, who got tapes from the Johnsons, according to court records.

Johnson has said he routinely records surgeries with the patient's permission and promises to keep the video confidential "during the patient's lifetime."

He said he gave Riccio permission to use the video after Smith died of a drug overdose in February 2007 in Florida. She was 39. Riccio's daughter edited the footage into a five-minute tape, scored with music similar to the theme from the film "Jaws."

The Johnsons' Houston-based attorney, Gus Pappas, did not return a message seeking comment Friday.

Larry Birkhead, who fathered Smith's daughter, called the video "truly disgusting" in a sworn declaration issued last year.

"It was clear that Anna Nicole was unconscious during the videotaping, and even more disturbing, the videotape focused on areas of her nude body that were unrelated to the location of the surgery," he said in the declaration.

Stern's attorney, Vivian Thoreen, said all the tapes have been accounted for under the judge's previous orders. She said the other terms of the settlement are confidential.

Although the Johnsons live in Texas, the Los Angeles Superior Court still has jurisdiction because the physician allegedly tried to disseminate the tape in Los Angeles County, said attorney Bruce S. Ross, who also represents Stern.

Anna Nicole Smith, leaves the U.S. Supreme Court, in this Feb. 28, 2006, file photo in Washington. AP

Las Vegas jury reaches verdict in Simpson case

LAS VEGAS (AP)—A court official says the jury has reached a decision in the O.J. Simpson armed robbery and kidnapping trial in Las Vegas.

Court spokesman Michael Sommermeyer says the verdict will be read around 10 p.m. in Clark County District Court.

The 61-year-old former football star and a golfing buddy, 54-year-old Clarence "C.J." Stewart, were tried on 12 criminal charges in the alleged gunpoint robbery of two sports memorabilia dealers in a casino hotel room last year. Each faces five years to life in prison if convicted of kidnapping, or mandatory prison time if convicted of armed robbery. They've pleaded not guilty to 12 charges, including conspiracy, coercion and assault with a deadly weapon.

The jury of nine women and three men deliberated more than 13 hours Friday.

Deliberations began 13 years to the day after Simpson was acquitted of killing his ex-wife, Nicole Brown Simpson, and her friend, Ronald Goldman, in Los Angeles.

O.J. Simpson appears in court with his attorney Yale Galanter during closing arguments in his trial at the Clark County Regional Justice Center Thursday, Oct. 2, 2008, in Las Vegas. AP

The Clark County jury heard 12 days of testimony, capped by prosecutors' arguments Thursday that the Las Vegas case had its roots in the 1994 slayings.

Prosecutor Chris Owens said Simpson planned—and Stewart helped carry out—a plot to retrieve personal items that Simpson lost after squirreling them away to avoid turning them over to Goldman's family to satisfy part of a $33.5 million civil wrongful death judgment levied in 1997 by a California court.

Owens told the jury to convict Simpson, denouncing him for "arrogance" of thinking he could commit a crime "against the dignity and the peace of the state of Nevada."

"The kind of arrogance ... that would make them think they could come in and get away with this kind of crime and that nobody would report it and they thought they could spin it that, 'It's all OK; It was my stuff.'"

Galanter told the jury the prosecution didn't prove Simpson was guilty in the criminal case that he said "has taken on a life of its own because of Mr. Simpson's involvement."

"Every cooperator, every person who had a gun, every person who had an ulterior motive, every person who signed a book deal, every person who got paid money—the police, the district attorney's office, is only interested in one thing: Mr. Simpson," Galanter said. "He has always been the target of this investigation, and nothing else mattered."

Galanter reminded the jury of a surreptitious recording of police investigators in the hotel room after the incident. "They're making jokes. They're saying things like, 'We're gonna get him,'" he said.

Since Sept. 15, the jury heard 22 often colorful witnesses—including seven of the nine people who were in the cramped hotel room. They've listened to numerous replays of secret recordings made before, during and after the alleged robbery.

Neither Simpson nor Stewart testified, and jurors were instructed not to consider that when judging the case. Two former co-defendants who said they brought guns did testify.

Judge Jackie Glass kept a tight rein on the proceedings and rejected several mistrial motions. She read 41 legal instructions to the jurors and six alternates before lawyers began closing arguments.

Galanter told the jury that the incident got out of hand because of former co-defendant Michael McClinton, who admitted displaying a gun during the confrontation.

"For whatever reason, Michael McClinton takes over," Galanter said, "and when McClinton takes over, he starts yelling and screaming and giving people orders and telling people to bag stuff up. And O.J.'s saying, 'Don't take anything that's not mine.'"

Rowling 'makes £5 every second'

JK Rowling is the world's highest-earning author, making more than £5 every second over the past year, US business magazine Forbes has announced.

The Harry Potter writer, who made a total of $300m (£170m) last year, wrote the first of her best-selling books about the boy wizard in 1997.

Her income was six times more than literature's next-biggest earner, James Patterson, of Along Came A Spider fame.

The magazine described her work as "a children's literary sensation".

TOP 10 BEST-PAID AUTHORS

1. JK Rowling - $300m (£170m)
2. James Patterson - $50m (£28m)
3. Stephen King - $45m (£25m)
4. Tom Clancy - $35m (£20m)
5. Danielle Steel - $30m (£17m)
6. John Grisham - $25m (£14m)
6. Dean Koontz - $25m (£14m)
8. Ken Follett - $20m (£11m)
9. Janet Evanovich - $17m (£10m)
10. Nicholas Sparks - $16m (£9m)

Source: Forbes magazine

Potter franchise

A Forbes spokesman said: "It was wizardry that transformed JK Rowling from a destitute single mother on welfare into a best-selling billionaire.

"Over on the big screen, her Potter franchise has already generated $4.5bn (£2.5bn) at the worldwide box office—and she still has three more flicks to come."

Since the first book, Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone, was published, the series has taken the world by storm.

The books have sold more than 400 million copies and been translated into 67 languages. The final instalment of the series, Deathly Hallows, has sold 44 million copies since it came out last summer—including 15 million in the first 24 hours, the magazine said.

Elsewhere on the list was horror author Stephen King in third place, followed by Tom Clancy, best known for his 1984 novel The Hunt for Red October.

At number five was Danielle Steel, with John Grisham and Dean Koontz equal in sixth place.

Best-selling author of Pillars of the Earth, Ken Follett, was in eighth place, while Janet Evanovich, the writer behind the Stephanie Plum novels, was at number nine.

US writer Nicholas Sparks rounded off the top 10. ***(BBC)***

Biden, Palin draw huge ratings

NEW YORK (AP)—Who's running for president, anyway?

More than 70 million people watched Thursday's vice presidential debate between Joe Biden and Sarah Palin on television, far more than the audience for the first contest featuring the top of the tickets.

That would make it the second most-watched political debate ever, behind only the 80.6 million people who watched President Jimmy Carter and challenger Ronald Reagan in their only 1980 encounter, according to Nielsen Media Research.

When John McCain and Barack Obama met in their first debate on Sept. 26, Nielsen recorded 52.4 million viewers. They will have two more debates, the first of them next Tuesday.

Palin has been a television star since joining the GOP ticket a month ago. The curiosity factor undoubtedly brought in viewers this week after Palin raised doubts about her readiness for the job with some wobbly TV interviews.

Most analysts said she erased some of those doubts Thursday but didn't necessarily win the debate or bring more voters into the McCain camp.

Timing may also have played a part in the big ratings. Thursday is one of the most popular nights of the week for TV-watching, while Friday, when McCain and Obama first debated, is one of the least popular.

Generally, only Super Bowls bring together so many Americans to watch the same thing.

Nielsen estimated that 69.99 million people watched Palin and Biden on either ABC, CBS, NBC, Fox, CNN, Fox News Channel, MSNBC, CNBC, BBC America, Telemundo or TeleFutura. The figure does not include PBS or C-SPAN, which also showed the debate, but PBS estimated its audience at 3.5 million.

The audience far exceeded any other vice presidential debate. The closest was in 1984, when Geraldine Ferraro was the first woman on a major-party ticket, and 56.7 million people watched her and Vice President George Bush.

ABC claimed a pundit victory. Its audience for the half hour of post-debate analysis Thursday was larger than that of NBC or CBS.

Natalie Cole released from hospital

NEW YORK (AP)—Natalie Cole, who suffers from hepatitis C, is resting at her Los Angeles home after being released from the hospital earlier this week, Cole's representative said Friday.

Publicist Maureen O'Connor said the Grammy-winning singer checked out several days ago and is "feeling a lot better."

The 58-year-old daughter of jazz legend Nat King Cole entered a New York hospital Sept. 12.

O'Connor said Cole has been receiving kidney dialysis that isn't related to her struggle with hepatitis C, a liver disease spread through contact with infected blood.

Cole announced in July that she was suffering from the disease, revealed to her during a routine examination, and that it was likely caused by her drug use years ago.

At the time of Cole's hospitalization, O'Connor blamed the singer's problems on the medicine she had been taking and a busy publicity schedule to promote her new album, "Still Unforgettable."

Cole

Cole canceled her singing appearances this month. O'Connor said she did not know when she will hit the road again in support of the disc.

Cole has sold millions of albums in her own long career. Her best-selling work was her 1991 multiple-Grammy winning CD, "Unforgettable ... With Love," on which she remade some of her father's classics.

'30 Rock' star Tina Fey to write humor book

In this Sept. 16, 2007, file photo Tina Fey is seen in Los Angeles.
AP

NEW YORK (AP)—Tina Fey, already the busiest of stars thanks to her Emmy-winning role in "30 Rock" and definitive impersonation of Republican vice presidential candidate Sarah Palin, is working on a book.

According to two publishing officials with knowledge of the negotiations, Little, Brown and Company will release a book of humorous essays by the 38-year-old Fey. Her many writing credits include "30 Rock" and "Saturday Night Live," and the feature film "Mean Girls."

The officials asked not to be identified, citing the confidentiality of negotiations, and declined to give financial details Friday. Little, Brown spokeswoman Heather Rizzo did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The deal was first reported Friday by The New York Observer.

King siblings' lawsuit could derail book deal

ATLANTA (AP)—A lawsuit involving the three surviving children of Martin Luther King Jr. and Coretta Scott King is threatening to derail a $1.4 million deal for a book on their mother.

The New York-based Penguin Group agreed to pay $1.2 million plus royalties to King Inc., which controls the civil rights icon's intellectual property. The publisher would pay another $200,000 to the Rev. Barbara Reynolds, who taped conversations with Mrs. King before she died in January 2006.

This week, Penguin said it would terminate the contract and demand the return of a $300,000 advance if the publisher does not receive photos, personal writing and letters within seven business days.

A message was left Friday with Penguin general counsel Karen Mayer.

The lawsuit—the third among the three siblings in as many months—was filed Sept. 24 in Fulton County probate court. Bernice King is listed as plaintiff and administrator of her mother's estate, and the estate of Martin Luther King Jr., which Dexter King controls, is listed as the defendant.

The siblings are feuding over whether the documents should be turned over. Bernice King and Martin Luther King III maintain that their mother no longer wanted to work with Reynolds on the book. They are asking that the documents be distributed among Coretta Scott King's heirs and not given to the publisher.

Dexter King, president and chief executive officer of King Inc., signed the book contract.

Craig Frankel, Dexter King's personal attorney, said his client was within his rights to sign the contract and had discussed the deal with his siblings.

"He signed the contract, but that's his job," Frankel said. "No one questioned when they got their share of the sale from the King papers whether Dexter had the authority to sign a contract. Nobody complained when they got their millions."

Mexicans boo Mayan pyramids concert

MERIDA, Mexico (AP)—Placido Domingo's concert at the Mayan ruins of Chichen Itza on Saturday night is being billed as "the world's greatest tenor at one of the Seven Wonders of the Modern World," a claim few lovers of opera or history would dispute.

But some Mexicans question whether the show should go on at all.

Archaeologists are pressing for criminal charges against the organizers, reviving a debate over how to use treasured ancient sites.

It's a balancing act many countries face as they try to promote and protect their cultural heritage. As artists seek to perform in stunning places from the Great Wall of China to India's Taj Majal and ancient Greek, Roman and Egyptian structures, many worry not only about damage but also about cultural propriety.

Domingo sought to reassure his critics Thursday, saying "I know there has been some discomfort in Mexico because I was going to perform at this site, but we have taken care of every detail to carry out this event."

Mexico's federal government turns down almost all requests to hold concerts at ancient temples, but they are increasingly pressured by state governors to promote ruins already swamped with tourists.

Domingo's concert inside Chichen Itza violates a law that requires the ruins to be preserved to educate Mexicans about ancient cultures, said Cuauhtemoc Velasco, a leader of the archaeologists' union.

AP
Spain's singer Placido Domingo speaks during a press conference in Chichen Itza, Mexico, Thursday, Oct. 2, 2008.

Racer Castroneves pleads not guilty in tax case

MIAMI (AP)— Race car driver and "Dancing With The Stars" winner Helio Castroneves pleaded not guilty Friday to federal tax evasion charges and declared outside the courtroom that he would treat the case like a race against the Internal Revenue Service.

"I'm a race car driver," the two-time Indianapolis 500 winner told reporters. "This is a very difficult situation. I'll be strong and I'll win this race."

Castroneves, 33, spoke after his release on $10 million bail following a court appearance in which he was shackled in handcuffs and leg chains and was visibly weeping into a wad of white tissue. Outside, Castroneves acknowledged he was overwhelmed by the weight of the moment.

"It's been a long day. It's been an emotional day, obviously," he said. "I am not guilty."

With that, Castroneves hopped into a waiting car and headed for a flight to Atlanta to participate in this weekend's Petit Le Mans race. Terms of Castroneves' release allow him to travel for work in the United States but not abroad, meaning he will likely miss a race later this month in Australia, said his attorney, Mark Seiden.

Stubborn tot plays hard to get with frustrated grandmother

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby

DEAR ABBY: After 12 years on the West Coast, my husband and I moved back East last year with our 3-year-old son, "Adam." My parents, my husband's mom and our siblings live here, and we wanted Adam to know his family.

The problem is, our son has taken to everyone except my mother. He'll hug and kiss everyone but her. He kisses the others in front of her, but crosses his arms over his chest and says, "No!" or runs away if he's asked to kiss her.

At first, Mom said it was OK because Adam needed time to adjust to her. But it has been a year, and he has barely given her two pecks. She says Adam doesn't like her. But he plays with her and has fun with her. Mom is now hinting that I need to teach him to "respect" her. She has referred to him as a "little brat" to others (in front of me) when he refused to be affectionate. I think she's being childish.

I can't force my son to be affectionate with Grandma, and if I continue to press it, he may never be. What can I do to make Mom feel better?

ADAM'S MOMMY

DEAR MOMMY: The subject of showing affection to Granny should be dropped. The harder you push your son, the more resistant he will become. Nor should your child be told to kiss anyone else. ("Kiss Auntie Abby! Kiss Uncle Walter!") Yech.

You say Adam enjoys playing and having fun with his grandmother. Has it occurred to you that he has turned his refusal to demonstrate affection to her into another game? Don't push. Let it happen. And please tell your mother not to let a 3-year-old ruin her day. He may be acting like a brat, but she's the grown-up, and she should be able to rise above it.

■ ■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: I have fallen in love with "Chris," an amazingly thoughtful, supportive, caring man. We have been dating for seven months. We have many values and interests in common, such as religion, social justice and the great outdoors. However, Chris is visually impaired.

Chris can't drive and has trouble reading regular type or street signs. My parents, whose opinion I respect, are against the relationship because of Chris' genetic disability and his race.

Should I continue this relationship? I know real love is a rare gift, yet I worry that I may be setting myself up for problems in the future. I'm afraid I may end up resenting Chris for what he can't do, and my parents for not accepting him. I would greatly appreciate some advice. Should love be blind?

INDECISIVE IN SAN FRANCISCO

DEAR INDECISIVE: Although love is often blind, couples are better off if they go into relationships with their eyes wide open.

People with disabilities often have abilities that enable them to contribute meaningfully to the community, as well as to their families. Do they have obstacles? Certainly. Can they be accommodated? Usually.

You have serious decisions to make about your future. Your parents' unwillingness to accept Chris because of his race will cause a serious rift if you proceed. Is your love for him strong enough to marry him anyway? If the answer is yes, then you and Chris should consult a geneticist to see what the odds are of your children inheriting his disability should you decide to have any.

You are asking all the right questions. However, some of the answers will have to come from within.

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Abby shares more than 100 of her favorite recipes in two booklets: "Abby's Favorite Recipes" and "More Favorite Recipes by Dear Abby." Send a business-size, self-addressed envelope, plus check or money order for $12 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby – Cookbooklet Set, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Postage is included in price.)

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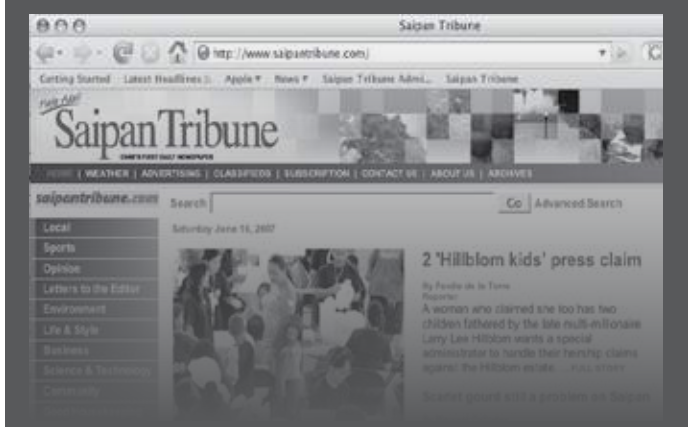

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235- NEWS

Rays, Red Sox near AL title duel

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. (AP)—The young, resilient Rays are one win from breezing into the American League championship series. All-Star Scott Kazmir settled down after a shaky start, Akinori Iwamura hit a go-ahead, two-run homer and the AL East champions beat the Chicago White Sox 6-2 Friday for a 2-0 lead in their first-round playoff series.

"This is just awesome," said Rocco Baldelli, who singled in a run.

Giving many fans a close-up look of the formula that transformed Tampa Bay from a last-place team to a power, the Rays rallied for the second straight day and remained undefeated in their young postseason history.

The Rays go for a sweep when the series resumes Sunday in Chicago. Tampa Bay's Matt Garza (11-9) faces John Danks (12-9), trying to seal a matchup against World Series champion Boston or the Los Angeles Angels in the next round.

"We're a relaxed bunch," Baldelli said. "We chill out in the clubhouse. We have fun. That's what got us here."

Of the 35 teams to fall behind 2-0 in the division series before this year, just five have come back to advance, according to the Elias Sports Bureau.

It's been a bleak October for both Chicago teams. The Cubs lost their first two NL playoff games at home to the Los Angeles Dodgers.

"We're against the wall," White Sox manager Ozzie Guillen said. "We've got to fight like a cat, and now it's a must-win game."

Chicago started quickly, scoring twice in the first on Jim Thome's RBI single and Alexei Ramirez's sacrifice fly, but Kazmir struck out Juan Uribe with the bases loaded after three straight foul balls.

Dioner Navarro's run-scoring single off Mark Buehrle in the second began the comeback following a two-base throwing error by Ramirez at second, and Iwamura gave Tampa Bay a 3-2 lead with a drive into the left-center field stands off Buehrle in the fifth.

"I knew it was gone," Iwamura said.

The Rays added three runs in the eighth, when B.J. Upton tripled and scored on Carl Crawford's single, which chased Buehrle. Baldelli's run-scoring single against Octavio Dotel made it 5-2, and Navarro followed with a RBI double off Matt Thornton.

At 24, Kazmir is the youngest member of Tampa Bay's rotation and already the franchise's career victories leader. But high pitch counts also have been an issue for the two-time All-Star, who threw 37 in the first inning.

He hit Orlando Cabrera with a pitch, walked Nick Swisher and gave up a single to Jermaine Dye that loaded the bases with no outs in the first.

"Be patient. That was my thought," Rays manager Joe Maddon said of Kazmir's struggles. "It's really important that we get him going. ... If he was able to get through that, I thought he might be able to settle in; and he did."

The White Sox threatened again in the second and fourth but couldn't score. They stranded eight runners through five innings, allowing the Rays to stay close until Iwamura's opposite-field homer put Tampa Bay ahead.

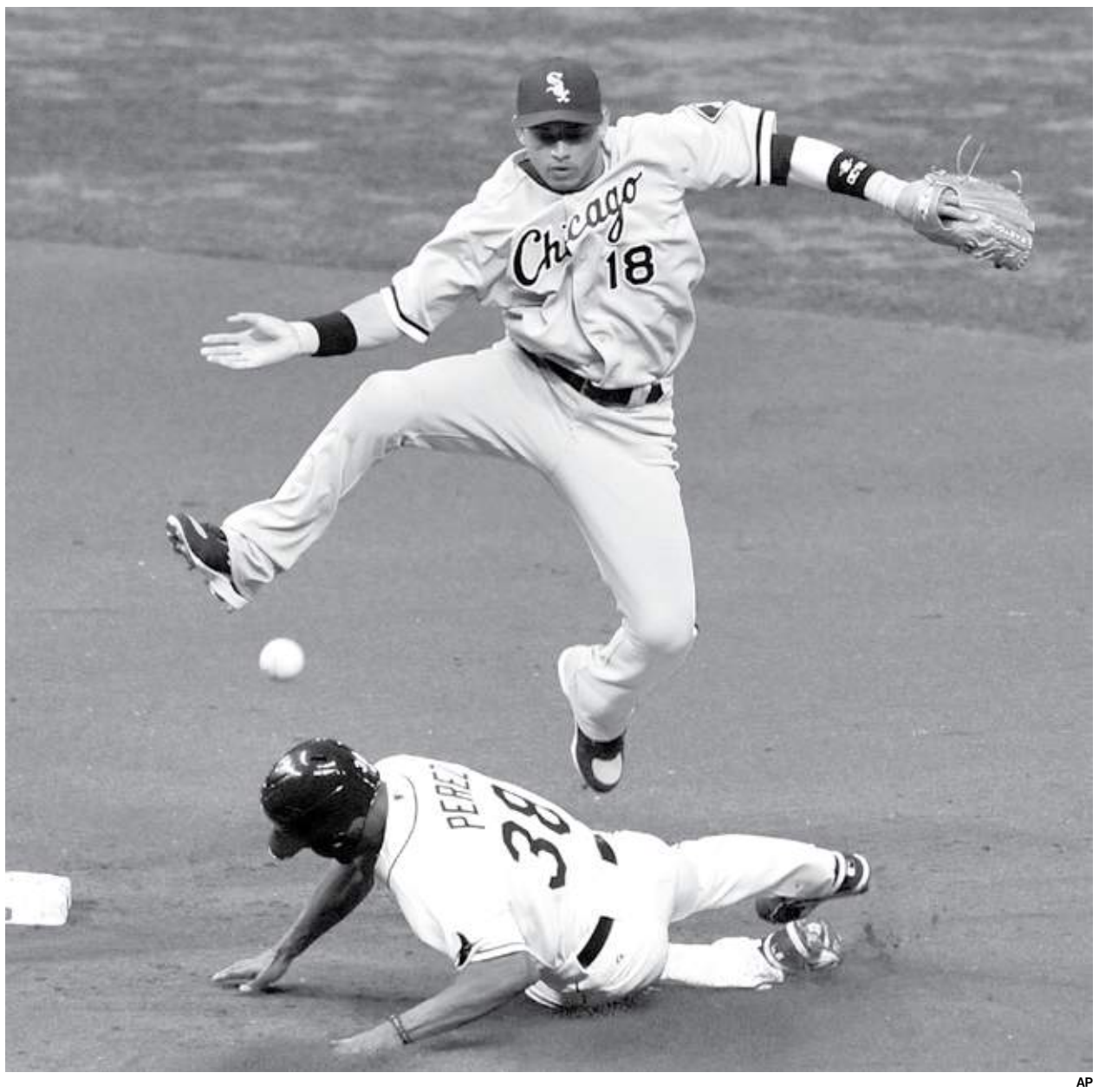
The sellout crowd of 35,257 at Tropicana Field stood and chanted "Aki! Aki! Aki!" for Iwamura until he poked his head out of the dugout for a curtain call. He homered once in 192 at-bats against left-handed pitching during the regular season.

Kazmir allowed two runs and eight hits in 5 1-3 innings, leaving after Uribe's leadoff single and a sacrifice bunt in the sixth. Maddon brought in Grant Balfour to face Orlando Cabrera, who had a heated exchange with the Rays reliever before striking out in crucial situation in Game 1.

Balfour got the better of Cabrera again, but this time without the dramatics of Thursday when the players shouted at each other after Balfour said something to himself on the mound and the White Sox shortstop mistakenly thought he was talking to him.

Cabrera grounded to second base, moving Uribe to third base, before Balfour escaped the jam by getting Swisher on a flyout.

Tampa Bay's bullpen pitched 3 2-3 scoreless innings, with J.P. Howell and Chad Bradford following Balfour.



AP

Chicago White Sox shortstop Orlando Cabrera throws to first for the double play as Tampa Bay Rays' Fernando Perez slides to the base in the second inning during Game 2 of the American League division series baseball game in St. Petersburg, Fla. Friday Oct. 3, 2008.

Red Sox 7, Angels 5

In Anaheim, California, Boston's latest postseason win over the Los Angeles Angels moved the team with baseball's best record to the verge of elimination.

J.D. Drew stunned Francisco Rodriguez with a two-run homer in the ninth inning, and the defending World Series champions beat the Angels 7-5 on Friday night for a 2-0 lead in their first-round AL playoff series.

Boston, one win from advancing to the AL championship series, won its 11th consecutive postseason game against the Angels, setting the record for most postseason wins in a row over one opponent. The Red Sox won their ninth consecutive postseason game.

Game 3 will be Sunday night in Boston, with Joe Saunders pitching for the Angels against Josh Beckett, who was pushed back from the opener after injuring a muscle in his side.

Drew's RBI double and Jason Bay's three-run homer off Ervin Santana gave Boston a 4-0 lead in the first inning, but the Angels, 100-62 during the regular season, clawed back and tied the score in the eighth when Chone Figgins hit a leadoff triple off Justin Masterson—the Angels' first extra-base hit of the series after 19 singles—and Mark Teixeira hit a one-out sacrifice fly against Jonathan Papelbon (1-0).

Rodriguez (1-0), who set a record with 62 saves in the regular season, got the last out in the eighth. He allowed a leadoff double to David Ortiz that bounced out of the glove of Reggie Willits, who tried for a leaping catch at the wall.

After Kevin Youkilis grounded out, Drew pounced on a changeup and sent it deep over the wall in center.

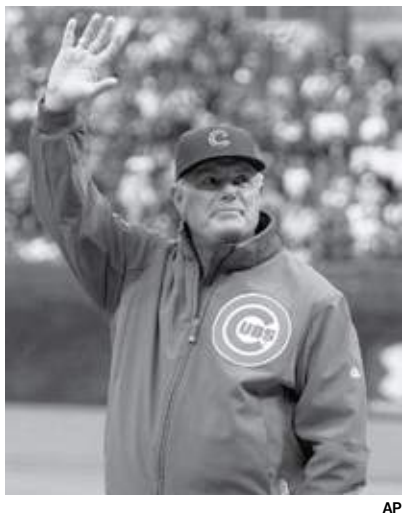
The Red Sox went 56-25 at Fenway Park this season—the second-best home record in the majors behind Tampa Bay's 57-24. The Angels' 50-31 road record was the best in baseball.

Tampa Bay, the Los Angeles Dodgers and Philadelphia also have 2-0 first-round leads.

Of the 35 teams to fall behind 2-0 in the division series before this year, just five have come back to advance, according to the Elias Sports Bureau. Only one—the 2001 New York Yankees—came back to win after losing the first two at home.

Papelbon retired all six batters he faced, getting help from Youkilis in the ninth. The third baseman caught pinch-hitter Gary Matthews Jr.'s foul popup with a terrific leaping grab over the camera well for the second out. Papelbon then struck out Howie Kendrick to end the game, and the closer leaped off the mound after his final pitch.

Chicago Cubs facing elimination game in LA



AP

Chicago Cubs manager Lou Piniella waves as he is introduced before the first inning baseball action in Game 1 of the National League division series against the Los Angeles Dodgers, Wednesday, Oct. 1, 2008, in Chicago

LOS ANGELES (AP)—All the talk of goats, curses and 100 years of World Series futility had the spotlight squarely on the Chicago Cubs in the NL division series. Now, it's the team from the weakest division in baseball that's on the verge of closing out the bumbling Cubs.

"I put the Cubs and Tampa and the Angels in the same boat. They dominated all year long," Dodgers manager Joe Torre said Friday. "They were the only clubs that really went wire-to-wire."

The Dodgers, meanwhile, had a losing record as recently as a month ago. But with Manny Ramirez's hitting, and newcomers Angel Berroa and Blake DeWitt doing a solid job up the middle as replacements, they rebounded from an eight-game losing streak and won their first NL West title in four years.

With a victory over the Cubs in Game 3 Saturday, the Dodgers would clinch their first playoff series win in 20 years.

"When you play at home, there's a lot of pressure on you to play well and win," Torre said. "You're supposed to win. I think we have that on us right now, especially winning the last two games."

Getting away from Wrigley Field and their fans' lofty expectations might be just what the Cubs need.

They bumbled their way to consecutive losses at Wrigley, getting outscored 17-5 and tying a division record with four errors in Thursday's 10-3 loss.

They were booed by their long-suffering fans, and a noticeable quiet enveloped the ballpark as the Dodgers piled up runs.

"Everybody had such high expectations and expecting us to just walk away with it the way we were playing," said Rich Harden, who will start Saturday. "You could kind of feel the energy a little bit after that first game around Chicago come down a little bit. But it's tough losing that second one. We can come here, kind of start fresh."

The Dodgers flew home after the game, landing at 4 a.m. Friday. The Cubs slept in their own beds, on the advice of a sleep consultant, and arrived at Dodger Stadium for a late afternoon workout.

"It's nice to get away from there and come on the road and hopefully win a ballgame," Cubs manager Lou Piniella said. "The fans have been very supportive all year and it's been fun playing in Wrigley Field all year. It just so happened we played two not so good ballgames, and they weren't happy."

The Cubs brought the NL's best record into the postseason, but their defensive miscues and lack of offense have them close to a ninth consecutive playoff defeat that would extend their championship drought to 100 years.

"If you have confidence in what you're doing, there shouldn't be pressure," Piniella said. "If you don't have confidence, that's when the pressure creeps in a little bit. The Dodgers have a little leeway, we don't have any."

Miami beefs up backcourt, signs Livingston

MIAMI (AP)—Shaun Livingston has never seen the gruesome video of himself grabbing a loose ball near midcourt, dribbling three times, going in for a layup attempt and having his left knee shred on the landing.

He doesn't intend to watch it anytime soon, either.

"I'm not focusing on the past. I'm just really looking forward," Livingston said. "No mental image in my mind should really derail me."

More than 19 months after that misstep nearly ended his career, Livingston has a second chance. The free agent point guard signed a two-year contract Friday with the Miami Heat, who believe Livingston—the No. 4 overall pick in the 2004 draft by the Los Angeles Clippers—could eventually be a steal.

"He has great size and feel for the game at his position," Heat coach Erik Spoelstra said. "I've followed him for a few years. It's unfortunate, really, what happened, but we'd normally never be able to get a player of his talent at this time. He's very committed to getting healthy and we have a great staff to help him get there."

The Heat had Livingston in for a workout about two weeks ago, and talks began intensifying Thursday night on a deal.

Heat president Pat Riley said last week the team only was $415,000 shy of reaching the luxury-tax threshold, so signing the 6-foot-7, 23-year-old Livingston would suggest another deal to free up some cap space could be forthcoming before the regular season opens at the end of the month.

"I think a lot of people will be surprised by how good he looks because of the injury he had," Heat guard Dwyane Wade said. "Of course we all know he still has a ways to go. But I think for the future I think it's going to be good. Give him time to get back in shape and time to get healthy and you've got a 6-7 point guard for the future at a very young age."

The Heat cut point guard Tre Kelley to make room on the 20-man training camp roster.

Livingston was at practice with the Heat Friday afternoon and will travel with the team to Europe for preseason games next week, although it isn't clear when he'll be ready for game action. The Heat already had three point guards vying for the starting spot, with Chris Quinn seeming to have the upper hand so far over rookie Mario Chalmers and Marcus Banks, who came to Miami last year from Phoenix in the Shaquille O'Neal trade.

"I'm excited to play, excited to be here in Miami and really show what I bring to the table when healthy," Livingston said.

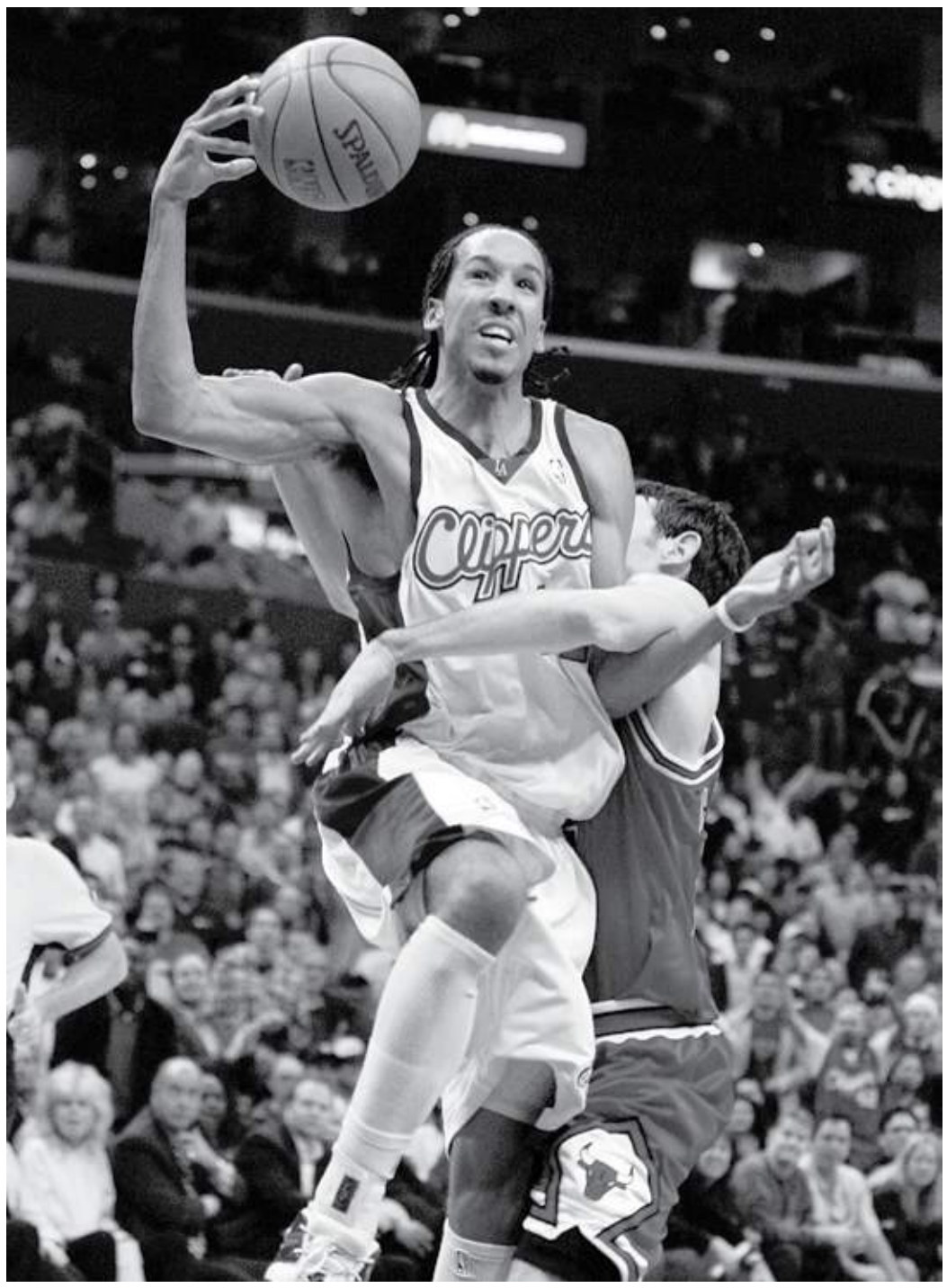
Several other teams showed interest in Livingston this offseason, including Portland, Minnesota and the Clippers.

Livingston was cleared for basketball activity last spring, and has been playing 5-on-5 scrimmages for several months, including some stints this summer in Chicago with Wade.

"It came down to Miami and Minnesota," said Livingston's agent, Henry Thomas, who also represents Wade. "And he was more comfortable there."

Livingston averaged 7.4 points and 4.8 assists in parts of three seasons with the Clippers. He was injured on Feb. 26, 2007, tearing three knee ligaments and dislocating his kneecap in a gruesome scene that Wade said he saw once and couldn't bear to see again.

"Shaun is 23 years old so he's still very young," Wade said. "And a 6-7 point guard, you don't really see too many nowadays. I think for the future of Miami, that's a good start."



AP

In this Jan. 31, 2007 file photo, Los Angeles Clippers' Shaun Livingston goes up for a shot as he is fouled by Chicago Bulls' Kirk Hinrich during the second half of an NBA basketball game in Los Angeles. The Miami Heat are giving Livingston a second chance at an NBA career. The free agent point guard signed a two-year contract with the Heat on Friday, Oct. 3, 2008, the first significant step in what he hopes is a comeback from a serious injury to his left knee 19 months ago.

Sparks' Parker wins WNBA MVP, rookie of the year

SAN ANTONIO (AP)—Candace Parker received the WNBA's most valuable player award Friday, becoming the first player to win the award along with the rookie of the year honors. The Los Angeles star was unanimously selected rookie of the year.

The awards capped a big run for Parker, who was college player of the year last season for national champion Tennessee. Parker also was a member of the gold-medal winning U.S. team in the Beijing Olympics.

Parker edged Connecticut's Lindsay Whalen and Seattle's Sue Bird in the MVP race.

"You know, Coach (Michael) Cooper set this goal for me early on, and I looked at him like he was crazy," Parker said. "He's like, 'We're going to win the rookie of the year, and you're going to win a championship and you're going to win the MVP.' I just looked at him like, 'That's what you expect of me already?'"

Parker, the top overall draft pick this year, averaged 18.5 points and 9.5 rebounds. She had a high of 40 points and grabbed 10 or more rebounds in 17 games. She led the league in double-doubles with 17, led the league in rebounding and led rookies in scoring, blocks (2.3 bpg) and minutes (33.6 mpg).

In the playoffs, Los Angeles beat Seattle in the Western Conference semifinals before losing to San Antonio in the conference finals.

NFL BRIEFS

Eagles RB Westbrook questionable vs. Redskins

PHILADELPHIA (AP)—Brian Westbrook was a full participant in practice for the first time in two weeks on Friday and appears likely to play Sunday when the Eagles host the Washington Redskins." He was able to get through everything," Eagles coach Andy Reid said. "It looked like he did it well. We will just see how he feels later today and then tomorrow. Most importantly, we'll see how he feels on Sunday." Westbrook is questionable on the injury report, but has been able to participate more in practice as the week progressed. The All-Pro running back would give the Eagles a big lift against Washington in a division showdown in the tough NFC East. Since Westbrook went down in the first half of a 15-6 win over the Pittsburgh Steelers in Week 3, the Philadelphia offense has been erratic. Last week in a 24-20 loss to Chicago, the Eagles were able to put up points in the first half but struggled late in the game .

Saints' Sedrick Ellis out 4 weeks

METAIRIE, La. (AP)—Top draft pick Sedrick Ellis will be lost to the New Orleans Saints for two to four weeks with a right knee injury. Ellis, the No. 7 overall selection in last April's draft, tore the medial meniscus in his knee during the Saints' win last Sunday against San Francisco and had arthroscopic surgery to repair the tear Friday morning.

He left Thursday's practice after hearing what he said was ``kind of a click" in his knee. Coach Sean Payton said the "click" is symptomatic of a typical meniscus injury. Ellis has started all four games this season for the Saints (2-2), and racked up 11 tackles and one sack. His loss hampers the Saints' defensive line greatly as the Minnesota Vikings and Pro Bowl running back Adrian Peterson come to New Orleans on Monday night. Payton also said it's fortunate the injury wasn't more severe, but Ellis' knee tear was serious enough to merit having surgery right away."

Branch to start for Seahawks Sunday

RENTON, Wash. (AP)—Deion Branch will start for the Seahawks on Sunday against the New York Giants, eight months after the veteran receiver had reconstructive knee surgery. Seahawks coach Mike Holmgren said Branch and Bobby Engram passed their tests of three consecutive practices this week. Both receivers will make their season debut at New York. The coach added after practice Friday morning that Keary Colbert or Billy McMullen will start opposite Branch. Engram will be in his normal role as the slot receiver. "They really did have a good week. Now, how much they play in the football game, we kind of have to see," Holmgren said after Friday's short, light practice just before the team flew east. "They'll be honest about it, they'll let us know. "They'll be excited to play again and they'll probably be gasping a little bit just from being out there again ... so we have to be smart with how we do that." Branch is a former Super Bowl MVP who tore a knee ligament in Seattle's playoff loss at Green Bay in January.

Gross out for Panthers Sunday; Otah doubtful

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (AP)—Jordan Gross' streak of 84 consecutive starts for the Carolina Panthers will end, while fellow starting tackle Jeff Otah is doubtful for Sunday's game against the Kansas City Chiefs. Gross, who has started every game since coming to Carolina in 2003, was ruled out Friday by coach John Fox. Gross was knocked unconscious during last Sunday's win over Atlanta and did not practice all week. Otah, who has a sprained right ankle, missed his third straight practice on Friday. Fox rarely starts players who have missed all week of practice. The Panthers likely will be forced to use a makeshift offensive line against the Chiefs. "It's part of the game," Fox said. "We've dealt with it before and we will deal with it again."

Ravens starting CB out at least one month

OWINGS MILLS, Md. (AP)—Baltimore Ravens starting cornerback Samari Rolle underwent neck surgery this week and will be out at least a month.

Rolle suffered a stinger in a 28-10 victory Sept. 21 over the Cleveland Browns after intercepting a pass in the fourth quarter.

"It was all kind of related from a stinger perspective. That was what he felt, the tingling in the shoulder, too," Raven coach John Harbaugh said Friday. "We have a time frame on him; it's maybe a month plus. He had a surgery this week on his neck to clean things up in there."

Peppers fined $10K for hit

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (AP)—The NFL has fined Carolina Panthers defensive end Julius Peppers $10,000 for a helmet-to-helmet hit on Atlanta Falcons quarterback Matt Ryan.

Referee Ed Hochuli was loudly booed when he threw his flag for roughing-the-passer on the play Sunday, which wiped out Richard Marshall's interception return for a touchdown early in the first quarter in Carolina's 24-9 win. Replays showed Peppers led with his shoulder, but the NFL determined on Friday that Peppers then hit Ryan in the head, drawing the fine and supporting Hochuli's on-field call.

The Week in Sports

CNMI cage teams take center stage

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Sports enthusiasts were treated to various local tournaments last week, but still craved for results from an off-island event—the 7th FIBA Oceania Youth Tournament—as the CNMI played in the regional caging for the first time.

The CNMI sent two teams in the tournament being held at the University of Guam Fieldhouse in Mangilao. The FIBA caging featured teams from the host, Tahiti, Palau, New Caledonia, Papua New Guinea, Fiji, and tournament favorite Australia.

The CNMI Junior Nationals who are coached by Rufino Aguon were grouped in Pool B along with the host, New Caledonia, and PNG.

The CNMI cagers dropped their debut against Guam, 102-61, but made the Commonwealth proud when they recorded their first victory in the tournament via a 93-84 triumph over PNG.

The Junior Nationals finished the pool play with a 1-2 record after being outgunned by New Caledonia in the third game, 131-92.

Aguon's wards made it into the quarterfinals, but lost to Tahiti, 97-74.

Despite failing to bring the Junior Nationals to the next round, Jericho Cruz made good account of himself in the FIBA caging, as he emerged as the top scorer in the pool play, collecting 69 points for an average of 23 points per game.

The CNMI cagebelles failed to secure a win in Pool A, losing to Tahiti, Fiji, and Australia. The CNMI bets were pitted against Guam in the quarterfinals and lost, too.

Back in local action, Chris "No Luv" Layug posted his third win in four fights after beating Derrick "Pinchi" Rangamar by unanimous decision in the main event of the Rites of Passage V: Raging Warriors.

Seventeen other bouts were featured in the Raging Warriors with late replacement Andrew Sablan making the biggest upset of the night, knocking out Martin "Tom Cat" Castro.

Ketson "Jack" Kabiriel had been a participant in the past two stagings of the Annual Banzai Memorial Half Marathon and Fun Run at the Banzai Cliff in Marpi, but won only this year.

Kabiriel finished the 19-mile race in one hour, 31.50 seconds, his new personal best. But his mark way behind the current record of 1:18.10 set by Eli Torgeson last year.

In the women's division, Oshima-Berger triumphed for the third straight time, setting a new record of 1:35.27.

Other top winners in the event were Matt Mancao and Mieko Carey, who ruled the Fun Run, clocking 26:10 and 29:48, respectively.

Jess Wabol may not be the fastest golfer to finish the 18-hole game at the LaoLao Bay Golf Resort, but he recorded the lowest gross score to prevail in Championship Flight of the 3rd Annual Kristo Rai Parish Golf Tournament.

Wabol fired a 3-under par 69 to win by three strokes over runner-up Rick Kautz, who posted an even par 72. Joji Taguchi came in third with his 3-over par 75.

Participants in the 2nd International PIC/Monster Point Break Open at the Pacific Islands flowrider facility in San Antonio needed more than speed, as they also had to show poise and creativity to get the judges' nod.

In the end, four riders stood out with their flashy moves through the machine-operated waves in the PIC facility.

The list included Andrew Johnson, who ruled the Grommets division, Gerald Domingo (men's Open), Park Hwa Young (women's Open), and Hayato Nogami (12-17 age group).

Riders who participated in the PIC event came all the way from Japan and Korea.

Saipan had another visitor last week in Oceania Badminton Confederation regional development manager Tony Mordaunt, who will have an 11-day visit to conduct coaching clinic and tour several schools to share his skills and knowledge of the game.

The rest of the games in regular tournaments on Saipan went ahead as set with the Coalition of Private Schools having their high school and middle school volleyball, Rotary holding the 18-and-under caging, and PIC and Northern Mariana Islands Volleyball Association continuing the 4-person beach volleyball games.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
The Sixers' Matt Duenas goes for a reverse layup against Rollers I defenders during their game in the Rotary caging.

NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.
A Whispering Palms player serves during their game against Saipan International School in the Coalition of Private School Volleyball League.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
CNMI's Jacque Wonenberg, left, and a Guam player prepare to get the rebound during their quarterfinals game in the 7th FIBA Oceania Youth Tournament at the University of Guam Fieldhouse in Mangilao.

NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.
Mieko Carey smiles as she nears the finish line in the fun run event.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
CNMI's Bill Babauta, left, dribbles past his defender during their game against Guam.

NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.
A fighter losses his balance, as he is cornered by his foe in one of the 18 bouts in the Rites of Passage V: Raging Warriors.

NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.
Championship Flight winner Jess Wabol, left, with Kristo Rai Parish president Joe Itibus.

NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.
Participants pose for a post-race group photo in the 3rd Annual Banzai Memorial Half Marathon and Fun Run at the Banzai Cliff in Marpi.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Gerald Domingo in one of his flashy moves during the PIC point break tournament.

Miami beefs up backcourt, signs Livingston

Shaun Livingston has never seen the gruesome video of himself grabbing a loose ball near midcourt.

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Saipan Tribune
Sports

Rays, Red Sox near AL title duel

The young, resilient Rays are one win from breezing into the American League championship series.

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JOS Corp. tops Friday Night League

By NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.
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REPORTER

JOS Corporation topped five other teams at the conclusion of the 22nd season of the Philippine Bowling Association Friday Night League at the Capitol Bowling Center.

Based on the final team standings, JOS Corporation closed out the season with 64 wins and 32 losses.

The team is composed of Rey Madrilejos, Atoy Banting, Orly Ebuen, Dannie Robles, Paul Bea, Ruben Avendano, Ferdie Generoso, Joe Digno, and Jorge Soledad.

They won a total prize of $550 plus individual trophies and a team championship trophy.

Winners received their prizes Friday night with PBA treasurer Ross Zapanta hosting the simple awarding ceremonies at the Capitol Bowling Center

It was JOS Corp.'s second championship since winning it first in 2006.

RR Consulting Services placed second, posting 59 wins and 37 losses.

Composed of Roger Vales, Jerrie Vales, Jamie Vales, Romy Guevarra, Pau Ramos, Raymond Angeles, Cris Balolong, Efren Cacdac, Eric Rabang, and Gilbert Morales, RR Consulting pocketed the second prize of $300 and a trophy.

Seabridge/MIFICPA had 58-38 win-loss record that was good for third place.

NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.
Members of champion team JOS Corporation celebrate with a photo session after receiving their trophies at the conclusion of the 22nd season of the Philippine Bowling Association Friday Night League Friday afternoon at the Capitol Bowling Center in Garapan.

The team of Melvin Malvar, Rene Cariaso, Tom Bernanrdo, Manuel Castro, Donato Besio, Ronnel Calama, Albert Forted, and Jun Banadera went home with $250.

Finishing fourth and fifth were Ambyth Micronesia and PTI.

Ambyth Micronesia carded 56.5 wins and 39.5 losses and earned $150, while PTI had 55.5-40.5 win-loss record and won $100.

Special awards for top team and individual performers in different categories were also given along with their corresponding money earned. The total money awarded to winners was $2,080.

UIC topped all the team awards. It was first in the category for high game scratch by compiling total pinfalls of 1,083 for a prize of $40. RR Consulting Services was second with 1,068 and won $35.

UIC also finished on top in high game with handicap with 1,190, while RR Consulting was second with 1,182 .

In high series scratch, UIC also led in total pinfalls with 2,952, while Jam It In had 2,852.

UIC was also first in high series with handicap with total of 3,273, while AGAPE was second with 3,157 .

In individual awards, Randy Abreu was first with 279 in the high game scratch , while Dannie Robles was second with 278.

Abreu also led in high game with handicap with 304 pinfalls, while Robles and Chester Bai tied for second with similar scores of 293.

Gina Sablan was first in the ladies division with her 224, as she topped five of the six categories in her division. She was adjudged as the ladies most improved bowler .Troy Verdaguer was the men's division's most improved bowler .

Sablan had the highest average with her 165.02, while Raymond Angeles prevailed in the men's division with his 188.39. Sablan gained her fourth individual award winning the high game with handicap with her average of 260 pinfalls.

In high series scratch, Richard Leong had 726 pinfalls, beating Ronald Epan who scored 717, while Gigi Zapanta topped the ladies division with 608.

Epan was first in high series with handicap by compiling 768 pinfalls, while Leong was second with 762. Sablan was first in the ladies division with her 703.

Oceania officer sees 12 qualified coaches from NMBF

By NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.
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REPORTER

Tony Mordaunt, the Regional Development Manager of Oceania Badminton Confederation, said there are 12 qualified coaches from the Northern Marianas Badminton Federation.

Mordaunt said these coaches who have been attending the coaching clinic he is conducting at the Gilbert C. Ada Gym would eventually be able to officiate tournaments that OBC will be sanctioning in the future.

Twenty-two players have been attending the clinic and those who will be selected will be asked to teach the basics of the sports to interested individuals.

"Right now, I'm instilling with them the basic ideas about the game," Mordaunt said.

These include footwork, technique and positioning.

The ongoing clinic, which is a brainchild of NMBF President Marconi Calindas, is part of Mordaunt's 11-day visit on Saipan.

He will also visit various schools here to promote the sport.

Asked to assess the level of play on Saipan, Mordaunt, who is from New Zealand, said that although the group has been in existence for about three years, he saw good signs toward developing good players

After Saipan, Mordaunt is scheduled to go to Palau for the same goal.

He has been visiting Pacific countries that are part of the Oceania zone and with the exception of Australia and New Zealand, Fiji, he said has the best players with the best program.

Fiji has a junior program which sets up regular tournaments being done in schools.

"The same thing goes in New Caledonia and Samoa," Mordaunt said.

Mordaunt hopes the CNMI will become a member of OBC soon to boost its program by getting benefits given to OBC members.

A member country in the OBC could avail of free visits by development officers of the zone, and free equipment and training.

Badminton is a regular event in the Summer Olympics.

NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.
Oceania Badminton Confederation regional development manager Tony Mordaunt stresses a point during his coaching clinic attended by members of the Northern Marianas Badminton Federation yesterday at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

OFF THE BENCH

By BOB COLDEEN
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Coldeen is a longtime journalist in the CNMI and is currently the news director of KSPN2

What we know

Four September Sundays does not an NFL season make.

We don't know anything because it doesn't matter because the NFL is not won in September; it's won in December and January.

College football is a different mammal, thanks or no thanks to rankings. A loss in September is devastating. In the pros, a team just needs to get to the playoffs hot and go all the way like the 2005 Pittsburgh Steelers, a mere 7-5 before winning eight straight games en route to Trophy.

On the other cleat, a team does not want to grow cold like the 1993 Miami Dolphins. After a 9-2 start, they lost their last five games and missed the playoffs.

After Week 3 of 2008, people were lining up to give the Dallas Cowboys the championship. Now after Week 4, the team has been poked apart and exposed. Nobody's talking about Tony Romo, they are talking about Jason Campbell. (and TO is talking about himself.)

How many of you picked Miami to go to Foxboro and whip the P-Men soundly? Or knew the Broncos would be roped by the Chiefs? We simply do not know who's going to be better on the field that day.

Which reminds me: actually we do know some things. We may not know who's going to win the Super Bowl (the NY Giants were 2-2 in September last year), but here's what we know after the first quarter of the regular season.

If you rip the heart out of a person, then that person will not function properly. Tom Brady is the heart of the Patriots.

Al Davis lost his marbles five or six years ago.

Lane Kiffin is young enough to go back to college … as a student.

Jeff Fisher is one of the NFL's best head coaches in getting the most out of his talent year after year.

Brett Favre is not dead.

Kurt Warner is not dead.

The Cincinnati Bungles are dead.

Plaxico Burress, Ocho Cinco (Chad Johnson is dead), Terrell Owens and Randy Moss have to be related somehow.

The NFC East is the toughest division.

The NFC West is the easiest.

The AFC East has the most intrigue.

Throwback uniforms are way cool. Unaware of any such stats, I wonder if they help teams win more than they would normally. Last weekend, the two teams that wore them both won. And I went to one college game where the team in the throwback won. Perhaps it's the Westinghouse Effect, the psychological phenomenon of improving work performance thru small changes in the environment. A different uniform surely qualifies. Hmmm.

Minnie Mouse could coach the Pittsburgh Steelers and they still would be a tough, physical team.

John Madden should sit on Tony Kornheiser.